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Mary H. Tuleston

Concord, Mass.

1876.

Cornelia E. Ryckman.

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"Fight manfully under Christ's  
"banner, & continue His faith-  
ful soldier & servant unto  
your life's end."

---

Mary H. Tuleston

From her Mother

October 31st, 1917





Thou shalt go upon the Lion and the Adder,  
The young Lion and the Dragon shalt thou tread  
under thy feet





THE  
SPIRITUAL COMBAT,

BY THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD,

LAWRENCE SCUPOLI,

CLERK REGULAR :

WITH

THE PATH OF PARADISE,

BY THE SAME.

---

TRANSLATED (WITH THE ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS)  
FROM THE ITALIAN, FOR THE USE OF MEMBERS OF THE  
ENGLISH CHURCH.

---

“Ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them: for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”—DEUT. xx. 3, 4.

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Mrs. John B. Seiverson

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TO

**Our Mother,**

IN WHOM WE WERE NEW-BORN TO GOD,

IN WHOM WE HAVE BEEN FED

ALL OUR LIFE LONG UNTIL THIS DAY,

IN WHOSE BOSOM WE HOPE TO DIE,

**The Church of England,**

BELOVED AND AFFLICTED,

AND BY AFFLICTION PURIFIED,

ONCE THE PARENT OF SAINTS,

NOW THROUGH OUR SINS FALLEN, YET ARISING,

IN

REVERENT AND GRATEFUL AFFECTION,

FROM

HER HUMBLEST AND MOST UNWORTHY SON,

WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER

THAT HIS INFIRMITIES AND SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS

MAY NOT ANY WAY GOD'S GRACIOUS WORK TOWARDS HER,

NOR WHAT IS PURPOSED

FOR THE HOLINESS OF HER CHILDREN

BRING AUGHT OF EVIL TO HER.



# NOTICE

BY

THE EDITOR.

---

THE "Spiritual Combat" is one of the many rich fruits of the Cross, from which comes every good gift and every grace to us, all spiritual wisdom as well as holiness. And perhaps of all the branches of that Tree, none has borne choicer gifts than shocking calumny, for zeal and righteousness' sake, meekly endured in silence. It does seem to give a special likeness and conformity to our Lord, when holiness in His servants draws upon them the hatred of the world, and they too, in Him and for Him, are "hated without a cause," and drink of His Cup, in that they (reverently to use the words) are with Him, and for His sake "numbered with the transgressors." "For my love they take my contrary part, but I give myself unto prayer." If we may venture to speak any thing of what no man can search into, the inward thoughts and pains of the Redeemer, we can imagine nothing so bitter, as the

blasphemies wherewith He was blasphemed, as though Himself had blasphemed His Father, Whom He loved. The Psalms prophesy of Him, "As a sword in My Bones, Mine enemies reproach Me, while they say daily unto Me, Where is thy God?" The Psalms, which speak of His deepest sufferings, foretell, "For Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered My Face. The reproaches of them that reproached Thee, have fallen upon Me." And then do His servants seem most likened to Him, in inward as well as outward suffering, when, hallowed by Him, the world hateth them, because it hated Him, and "false witnesses lay to their charge things that they knew not."

In patient retirement, under some shocking calumny<sup>a</sup>, which ranked its author among the carnal and the degraded, the "Spiritual Combat" was written.

<sup>a</sup> The notice of the life of Scupoli, furnished by F. de Tracy, Theatine, (prefixed to the French translation by De Brignon, ed. 1818,) mentions that one calumny only, as does the Italian notice (below). Alban Butler (t. ii. p. 840, note) says, "God permitted him to fall into violent persecutions, through slanders and jealousies, by which he was removed from serving the public. He bore all injuries and all calumnies, even," &c. Perhaps he has related a little vaguely, as just before he speaks of Scupoli's preaching at Placentia, Milan, Genoa, Venice, and Naples; whereas other accounts seem to imply that his public ministry ceased with this calumny at Genoa; Venice was the place of his retirement; Naples, the home of his old age.

So was the Author hidden from the world, that it does not appear now to be known, how the calumny was circulated, prevailed, or disappeared. It came when he was much past middle life, (55,) and when such a special calumny as this, might well be thought too improbable to have prevailed. Only, to the world's followers, nothing is incredible, except the holiness of the servants of God. "If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more those of His household?" The calumny which thus gathered around him, when his heaven-ward course was now far run, accompanied him for twenty-five years, to its close. It was believed, as it seems, by those who knew him not; it could not but be disbelieved by those who knew him. Yet it had influence enough to change the outward employments of all his after-life, and to withdraw him from the active duties of his calling, to serve God in his cell only. After fourteen years, in which he exercised very uncommon powers in preaching and in the guidance of souls in populous cities, he disappears at once almost, for the rest of his life. He seems to have been brought to Genoa, in his own purpose, or in that of his superiors, to minister to those afflicted by the plague; in the secret purpose of God, himself to be perfected by this sorest of all trials, to be counted unfaithful to Him, a hypocrite, and abandoned. The calumny, we are briefly told <sup>b</sup>, originated

<sup>b</sup> F. de Tracy, l. c.

with "a person of the world, at a time when he was exercising with great zeal the functions of his ministry; he was even come to Genoa, to succour those suffering from the plague. He adored the decrees of Providence, Who permitted this calumny. He came to Venice, where he lived in retirement, united with JESUS CHRIST in His humiliations and sufferings; and there he composed his 'Spiritual Combat.'" He committed his grief in silence to God; but the depth of it, at first, one may in some sort imagine, in that the favourite virtue, which he involuntarily instances in the Spiritual Combat, is "patience." But what God withdraws, He replaces seven-fold. What is borne in patience, in submission to His Gracious Will, and united with the Cross of Christ, He endues with a portion of the power of the Cross, and makes it mighty to draw souls to Himself. If F. Scupoli gained his thousands in active duty, he won his tens of thousands, in silence and stillness, in his narrow cell, "united" in shame and in love with his Crucified Master and God. Four years after his retirement, (A. D. 1589,) the "Spiritual Combat" first appeared: and in the twenty-one years which its author yet had to pass, in silence, shame, and a "rigorous" voluntary "poverty" here below, it had been spread abroad in nearly fifty editions<sup>c</sup>; had been translated into different languages; and had, we know, been the

<sup>c</sup> Ibid.



guide of one eminent saint and servant of God, who, in his turn, by preaching, life, directing of souls, and by his writings, won, and is still winning, his thousands to the love of God, S. Francis de Sales<sup>d</sup>. This was the first fragment of the work, consisting of twenty-four chapters only<sup>e</sup>. It was gradually enlarged by the author; so that it appears to have been the continual fruit of his pious thoughts and continued discipline. It was again published in thirty-three chapters; then, before his death, in sixty<sup>f</sup>; and, finally, in sixty-six chapters. Thirty-eight shorter chapters, which were never finished by the author, have since been published. They are chiefly upon the same subjects, and it may be doubted whether they are a supplement, or an unfinished sketch.

<sup>d</sup> "Alexander VII., after having beatified, in 1659, the holy Bishop of Geneva, sent a message to the General of the Theatines, F. Bozomo, that, 'in beatifying S. Francis de Sales, he had beatified a son of his congregation, since the holy Bishop of Geneva had derived his piety from the teaching of the Spiritual Combat.'" Letter of F. Bozomo to the religious of his congregation, Rome, Feb. 22, 1662, quoted in French Notice. S. Francis de Sales began his ministry in 1591.

<sup>e</sup> French Notice, p. vii.

<sup>f</sup> "A French translation, published A. D. 1608, two years before his death, contained sixty chapters, with the title, 'The Spiritual Combat, composed by the Regular Priests, commonly called Theatines, and by them enlarged with twenty-seven chapters.'" French ed. "The 2nd and 3rd Italian editions have nine chapters added" (in all, thirty-three). Biogr. Univ. vit. Scupoli, n. 1.

From that time it has been the guide of souls in almost all nations. Among the translations, of which the writer has seen notices, are French, English, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Flemish, Armenian<sup>g</sup>, Basque<sup>h</sup>, and Arabic<sup>i</sup>. Nine years had not elapsed from Scupoli's blessed decease, when there was an "Asiatic" and "Indian" translation<sup>k</sup>. When ninety years had flowed away, after his disgraced retirement, (A. D. 1675,) there had been (including' the translations) nearly three editions of this work year by year, on an average; in all, two hundred and sixty<sup>l</sup>. And thus the seed which seemed trampled under foot, arose multiplied; and the voice which calumny, for the moment, was allowed to silence, thereby, the rather, spake in

<sup>g</sup> These are mentioned in the French edition, l. c., which names three Latin, "by F. Meazza, Theatine of Milan; Loricus, a celebrated Professor at Fribourg, afterwards a Carthusian; and F. Mazotti, a Theatine of Verona, of whose French translation there were five editions in fifteen years, A. D. 1668—1673." There were eight French translations. The Armenian was published at Venice, 1723. (Biogr. Univ.) A full account of the editions and translations is given in an historical dissertation by Contini, prefixed to the Latin edit., Veronæ, 1747. (quoted in the French pref.)

<sup>h</sup> In 1665. Biogr.

<sup>i</sup> By the Propaganda, A. D. 1775. Ib.

<sup>k</sup> Mentioned in the Italian edition at Placentia, 15[91? it is printed, 1519.] Biogr. note 4.

<sup>l</sup> Enumerated by Vezzosi, Scrittori Teatini, ii. 280, sqq., quoted Biogr. n. 3.

every tongue the things of God, and in all won souls to Him. He who might have been a preacher and guide of souls in one nation and time only, has been a teacher and guide well-nigh throughout the world.

Yet it was not by any act of his own that the writer did not lie wholly hid. His work at first appeared under his own eye, with the single title, "by a servant of God<sup>m</sup>;" later, and at a distance from him<sup>n</sup>, it received the name of the Order to which he belonged, as though it had been the produce of the united wisdom of the Order<sup>o</sup>, among whom he had been fostered. S. Francis de Sales says only, "it was given me by a Theatine. It was composed by a holy religious of that celebrated congregation, who concealed his own name, and allowed it to be circulated under the name of his Institute." So had he concealed himself, that, as in "the Imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ," other religious orders could claim the work for members of their own; and, even recently, evident as it is, that the whole is the work of one mind, it has been held that part is the work of a Spaniard, enlarged

<sup>m</sup> "The three first editions were published at Venice; the first has no indication of the author; the second and third bear this title." Biogr. n. 1.

<sup>n</sup> "The eighth edition, at Milan, 1593, first attributed it to the Theatines; the name of Scupoli did not appear upon the title until the year of his death, Bologna, 1610." Biogr. n. 2.

<sup>o</sup> See above, p. ix, n. f.

by F. Scupoli<sup>p</sup>. Truly, O God, "those that fear Thee," "Thou hidest in the secret of Thy Presence from the provokings of all men; Thou keepest them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues." The Brightness of His Presence, through which their souls have light, hides them the more from the world; "the pillar of fire" which gives them light, to the world is cloud and darkness. "In the secret of His Presence," they lie at rest; in It, they found refuge; by It, they were enveloped, that the provokings and strifes of men should not reach them; but hidden there, they are revealed to themselves, so that praise or blame affects them not, who know themselves more truly; and seeking His glory only, they desire to remain themselves unknown to all but Him.

It would be misplaced, in such as the Editor, to praise a work which, under God, S. Francis de Sales owned, of all human books, to have been his guide in holiness. But it is eminently, what he terms it, "all practice." No where, perhaps, in the

<sup>p</sup> "It has been claimed by the Benedictines for F. Castagna, a Spanish religious, and by the Jesuits, for a member of their fraternity, F. Achille Gagliardo," ["a famous preacher in Italy, known, esteemed, and greatly cherished by S. Charles Borromeo," De Brignon]; "but the Theatines have proved demonstrably, that the real author is F. Scupoli. The details of this dispute may be found in the Latin Diss. of F. Contini, Verona, 1747, taken from the Memoirs of F. Raph. Savonarola, and in the Scrittori Teatini of F. Vezzosi." Biogr.

same space of human books, is there the same fulness and explicitness of rules, *how* to live holily. It seems the experience of a life condensed. And this may give it such an especial value, among us, now when so many are silently looking out for more special guidance, that it is so full of practical rules, *what* to do, *how* to escape temptation, *how* to advance in holiness. S. François de Sales' testimony to it is upon this special point. It was, when asked by the Bishop of Bellay, "who was his director?" that he drew from his pocket the *Spiritual Combat*, and said, "This is he who, with God, taught me from my youth up; he is my master in all the exercises of the inward life. When I was a scholar at Padua, a Theatine made me acquainted with it, and commended it to me; I followed his advice, and it has been well with me." "He<sup>9</sup> much valued this sentence, which is attributed to Thomas à Kempis, who is held to be the author of the '*Imitation*:' 'I sought rest every where, and found it only in

<sup>9</sup> *Esprit de S. François*, iii. 7. "He approved extremely the advice ascribed to S. Thomas, viz., that to study well, you ought to have but one book. On this ground he praises those who, for their spiritual guidance, attached themselves to some one book of devotion, as the *Spiritual Combat*, which was his dear book; '*the Method of Serving God*,' which, with his permission, I chose for mine; the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*; the *Guide, or Memorial*, by Grenada, and the like; not as rejecting others, but wishing only that they should hold the places of accessories or commentaries on the principal book." lb. xvi. 26.

a little corner, with a little book.' And he said, that to study well, one ought to read one book only; they who pass lightly over several, never study to any purpose. He advised, accordingly, to choose some good book, and that, if possible, it should be a little one and portable; to read it often, and practise it yet oftener. The *Spiritual Combat* was his dear book, his favourite book. He has often told me, that he had carried it more than eighteen years in his pocket, reading daily some chapter, or, at least, some page of it. He recommended this book to all those who applied to him, saying, it was all excellent, all practical. The more I read it, the more I observe in it, as in its germ, all the spiritual teaching of our saint." What was for eighteen years the daily companion of S. Francis de Sales—what he commended to those who had his own guidance, as "clear, methodical, and all practice"<sup>r</sup>—what he

<sup>r</sup> Lett. 119, à Mad. de Chantal. A. D. 1607, "My dear daughter, read the 28th chapter of the *Spiritual Combat*, which is my dear book, which I have carried in my pocket, it must be, these eighteen years, and which I never re-read without profit." (In Lett. 120, to the same, A. D. 1608, are nearly the same words, but here the number is fifteen years.) Ep. 86, to the same, "The 'Method of Serving God' is good, but perplexed and difficult, beyond what is required for you; the *Spiritual Combat* contains all said there, and more clearly and methodically." Ep. 127, to a Lady, A. D. 1607, "You may read with benefit the works of the Mother Theresa and S. Catherine of Sienna, the 'Method of Serving God,' the 'Manual (Abrégé)

“ never re-read without profit ” — what he commends, of all human books, as the one companion of the souls for whom he cared, will be found to re-place individual guidance, when any have it not. It is in such books, as far as it is in human books at all, that spiritual guides must themselves learn.

To us too it comes commended, nearer home, by one, himself a confessor in the cause of holy living, the Apostolic Bishop Wilson ; and his brief designation <sup>s</sup> of “ the devout author of the spiritual life,” bespeaks the more his value for the work, since he

of Christian Perfection,’ the ‘ Pearl of the Gospel ;’ but be not in a hurry to put in practice all which you find beautiful in them ; go gently, aspiring after these high instructions, and admiring them ; but recollect, that a whole banquet, prepared for many, is not to be devoured by one. ‘ Hast thou found honey ; eat what sufficeth,’ says the Wise Man. The ‘ Method,’ the ‘ Perfection,’ and the ‘ Pearl,’ are very obscure books ; their path is on the mountain-tops ; you must not take up your time with these. Read and re-read the Spiritual Combat ; this ought to be your dear book ; it is clear and all practical.”

<sup>s</sup> “ We do not want examples to recommend this spiritual communion. The learned and pious Bishop Taylor—the worthy and ingenious author of the Unbloody Sacrifice—the devout author of the Spiritual Combat, &c., have proposed some such help as this for the use and comfort of those devout souls who are deprived of the holy Sacrament in the Church. And to those we are indebted for this intimation.” Note on “ Spiritual Communion,” appended to “ Office of Holy Communion.” Works, ii. p. 131. ed. 8.

so seldom refers to any human authors. It is the praise of one, whose "delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did he meditate day and night."

The present translation differs considerably in language from that already existing, being formed from the Italian, whereas the previous translation is from the French of the Abbé Brignon. The substance of the rules must be the same; yet, wherever the writer has compared the language, he could not but much prefer the conciseness and simplicity of the original<sup>t</sup>, to the paraphrastic style adopted in this, as in most French translations of religious books.

As being a book of practice, there was scarcely any thing in it to omit, in translating it for the English Church. And this, amid the serious practical differences which remain, is a comfort to those who, with good Bishop Ken and Bishop Andrewes, mourn over the breaches of the Church, and pray that they may be healed, that as we have "one hope of one calling, one faith," in Him, our "One Lord," so we may be guided along the same narrow way in Him Who is the Way, by those who have before us, in either Communion, been brought into it by Him, and led by Him unto Himself. So while those things remain, for which Almighty God still permits

<sup>t</sup> A. Butler speaks of the "clear concise style, which, in the original Italian, breathes the most affecting, sincere simplicity, humility and piety."



the Church to be divided, may we, at least, grow in love for those from whose writings we derive spiritual benefit, and love what is holy in one another, and our Blessed Lord in His true servants.

Of such helps along the narrow way, the present work seemed eminently adapted to our present condition, being full of rules and principles of universal application, such as any one might readily apply to his own case, and altogether belonging to ordinary life, and to all who would in earnest carry on the Christian warfare, not (as some in Surin) to those only who are waging that warfare most devotedly.

May He, in His mercy, prosper us and it,—the Captain of our salvation, with the sign of Whose “Cross” we were in Baptism “signed, in token that hereafter we should not be ashamed to confess the faith in Him Crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives’ end.”

E. B. Peckey.

Christ Church,  
Quinquagesima, 1846.



## NOTICE OF F. SCUPOLI,

PREFIXED TO THE ITALIAN.

---

THE author of this most useful little work is the Venerable Servant of God, Lorenzo Scupoli, Theatine Clerk Regular, who was born about the year 1530, in Otranto, a city which now gives its name to the ancient province of Salentinum, in the kingdom of Naples, and received the name of Francis in his baptism. At about the age of forty, he requested very earnestly to make his profession in the Institution of S. Caietan, on which account the General Chapter of the Theatines, held in Venice, in 1569, gave power to its fathers of S. Paul, of Naples, to receive him into their congregation. In fact, S. Andrew Avellino, who was the provost, received him; and on the 25th of January, 1571, he was admitted to the solemn profession by Jerome Ferro, his successor in that office, and by his own desire was called Lorenzo of Otranto. God had designed him to be a famous spiritual master, not only by word and example, but by writing; and to this end en-

riched him with the needful gifts. In 1577, he went over to Placenza, where, before Christmas day, he was admitted to Priest's orders. The following year he went to Milan, where the above-named S. Andrew Avellino was provost of the house of S. Antonio. In 15[81?] <sup>a</sup>, he was removed to that of Genoa, the scourge of the plague, which in the preceding year had grievously afflicted that unhappy city, having ceased. The Almighty was pleased in 1585 to try His servant, who was then in the house of S. Silvester, of Rome, at the Quirinal, by one of those tribulations which He is wont to send to His elect, and Scupoli bore it courageously and as a Christian, though it ceased only with his life. But God, Who killeth and maketh alive, Who layeth low and lifteth up at His Will, so ordered it, that in spite of his humiliation, the greater number of the faithful who knew him only by report, proclaimed

<sup>a</sup> The edition of 1839, from which this is taken, has 1511. This is plainly a misprint; and so leaves some room to doubt whether the remaining figure be accurate. The notice prefixed to the French edition says that he had come to Genoa to succour those afflicted by the plague. But it differs from this again, in that this places the scene of the calumny at Rome, that at Genoa. Muratori mentions Genoa last of the places visited by the great plague, which arose (it is thought) from the conflux of pilgrims to Rome in 1575, then broke out at Trent and Verona; burst out anew at Venice in 1576, and crept on from city to city. A sort of epidemic cough returned on Italy in 1580. De Thou mentions only the great plague, generally as raging in 1576-7; and one at Paris, in 1580.

and revered him as a sure guide in the path of Christian perfection. Among these, it is enough to name the young Count Francis of Sales, who was studying at Padua, and there received from him that teaching which led him to a high degree of holiness, and of dignity in the Church. Scupoli, who was residing in Venice, in 1589, visited Padua in the same year, and in 1590, and 1591, knew and conversed with the holy Bishop of Geneva, and gave him a copy of the Spiritual Combat, which he prized so highly, that for eighteen years he had it ever with him, having assured his biographer and great friend, G. Peter Camus, Bp. of Bellay, that "it alone, after God, had been his spiritual guide." About 1599, Scupoli returned to Naples, the last abode of his mortal body, where he died in the odour of sanctity, about the age of eighty, on the 26th Nov., 1610, in the very house of S. Paul, where, forty years before, he had assumed the habit of the Theatine Regular Clerks of S. Caietan.



TO THE  
CHIEF CAPTAIN AND MOST GLORIOUS CONQUEROR,  
JESUS CHRIST, Son of Mary.

---

SEEING that the sacrifices and offerings of us mortals, when offered unto Thee from a pure heart to Thy Glory, ever have been, and ever will be, pleasing unto Thy Majesty ; I therefore present unto Thee this little treatise of the Spiritual Combat, dedicating it to Thy Divine Majesty. Nor do I draw back, because this treatise is insignificant ; for it is well known, that Thou Alone art that Mighty Lord, Who delightest in humble things, and despisest the smoke and pretensions of the world. And how could I, without blame and without hurt, dedicate it to other than Thy Majesty, who art King of Heaven and Earth ? Whatsoever this treatise teacheth, all is Thy teaching ; for Thou hast taught us, that, “distrusting ourselves, we should trust in Thee, fight and pray.”

Besides, if every combat needs an experienced head to lead on the battle and encourage the sol-

diers, who fight the more ardently when they fight under an invincible captain, will not this Spiritual Combat stand in need of such a Head? We choose Thee then, JESUS CHRIST, (for we are resolved to fight against and conquer some enemy,) we all choose Thee for our Captain, Thou Who hast conquered the world, the Prince of darkness, and with the Wounds and Death of Thy Sacred Flesh hast subdued the flesh of all those who have fought and will fight devotedly. Lord, when I planned this Combat, I had ever in mind that saying: "For we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." If without Thee, and without Thy aid, we are not able to have any good thoughts, how can we, of ourselves alone, fight against so many most powerful enemies, and avoid such numberless, hidden, snares? Thine, Lord, is the Combat, on all sides; for, as I said, Thine is the teaching, and Thine are the spiritual soldiers: among whom are we Theatines, Regular Clerks: we all therefore, bent low at the Feet of Thy most Exalted Majesty, pray Thee to accept this Combat, ever moving us, and quickening us with Thine effectual grace to fight more and more devotedly; for we doubt not, that, if Thou fight in us, we shall conquer to Thy Glory.

Thy most humble servant,  
purchased with Thy Blood,  
LORENZO SCUPOLI, C. R.



## CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
1. What constitutes Christian perfection. We must fight in order to attain it : of the four things necessary for this combat . . . . .	1
2. Of mistrust of self . . . . .	7
3. Of trust in God . . . . .	10
4. How a man may know whether he is acting in mistrust of self, and trust in God . . . . .	12
5. Of the error of many, who mistake fear for godliness . . . . .	13
6. Further advice as to the attainment of mistrust of self, and trust in God . . . . .	14
7. Of spiritual exercise, and first of the understanding, which must be guarded against ignorance and curiosity . . . . .	16
8. Of the causes which hinder us from a right discernment of things, and of the method which we must adopt for enabling us to understand them aright . . . . .	17
9. Of another thing from which the understanding must be guarded, to enable it to discern things rightly . . . . .	19
10. Of the exercise of the will, and of the end to which all actions, whether external or internal, should tend . . . . .	21
11. Of some considerations which may incline the will to seek to please God in all things . . . . .	26
12. Of the divers wills that are in man, and of the warfare between them . . . . .	27
13. Of the way to resist the impulses of sense, and of the acts to be performed by the will, in order to acquire habits of holiness . . . . .	30
14. What must be done when the superior will seems to be wholly stifled and overcome by the inferior, and by other enemies . . . . .	36

CHAP.	PAGE
15. Some advice touching the manner of fighting ; and especially against whom, and with what resolution we must carry on this warfare . . . . .	39
16. In what manner the soldier of Christ should take the field early in the morning . . . . .	40
17. Of the order to be observed in the conflict with our evil passions . . . . .	43
18. Of the way to resist sudden impulses of the passions . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
19. Of the way to resist the sins of the flesh . . . . .	45
20. Of the way to combat sloth . . . . .	51
21. Of the regulation of the outward senses, and the way to pass on from these to the contemplation of the Divinity . . . . .	55
22. How the same things are to us the means of regulating our senses, and of leading us on to meditate on the Incarnate Word, in the mysteries of His Life and Passion . . . . .	58
23. Of other means whereby to regulate our senses according to the different occasions which present themselves . . . . .	60
24. Of the way to rule the tongue . . . . .	66
25. That in order to fight successfully against his enemies, the soldier of Christ must avoid, as much as possible, all perturbations and disquiet of mind . . . . .	69
26. What we should do when we are wounded . . . . .	72
27. Of the means employed by the devil to assail and deceive those who desire to give themselves up to holiness, and those who are already taken captive in the bondage of sin . . . . .	75
28. Of the devil's assaults and stratagems against those whom he holds in the bondage of sin . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
29. Of the arts and stratagems by which he holds in bondage those who, knowing their misery, would fain be free ; and how it is that our resolves prove so often ineffectual . . . . .	77
30. Of the delusion of those who think they are going onward to perfection . . . . .	79

CHAP.	PAGE
31. Of the devil's assaults and devices to draw us away from the path of holiness . . . . .	81
32. Of the last assault and device above-named, by which the devil tries to make virtues already acquired the occasion of our ruin . . . . .	84
33. Some advice as to the conquest of evil passions, and the acquisition of fresh virtues . . . . .	91
34. Virtues are to be acquired gradually, by exercising ourselves in several degrees of them, and giving our attention first to one, and then to another . . . . .	94
35. Of the means whereby virtues are acquired, and how we should make use of them, by attending for some space of time to one virtue only . . . . .	96
36. That in the exercise of virtue we must walk in continual watchfulness . . . . .	99
37. That as we must always continue in the exercise of all virtue, so we must not shun any opportunity which presents itself for their acquisition . . . . .	100
38. That we should highly cherish all opportunities of fighting for the acquisition of virtues; and chiefly those which present the greatest difficulties . . . . .	102
39. How we may avail ourselves of various opportunities for the exercise of a single virtue . . . . .	105
40. Of the time to be given to the exercise of each several virtue, and of the signs of our progress . . . . .	106
41. That we must not yield to the wish of being delivered from the trials we are enduring patiently; and of the way to regulate all our desires, so as to advance in holiness . . . . .	108
42. How to resist the devil, when he seeks to deceive us by means of indiscreet acts of devotion . . . . .	110
43. Of the power of our own evil inclinations, and the instigations of the devil to incline us to form rash judgments of our neighbours; and of the way to resist this temptation . . . . .	112
44. On prayer . . . . .	115
45. What constitutes mental prayer . . . . .	119
46. Of prayer by means of meditation . . . . .	121

CHAP.	PAGE
47. Of another way of praying by means of meditation . . . . .	123
48. Of meditation on Christ's Passion, in order to excite various affections in the soul . . . . .	124
49. Of the profit to be derived from meditation on The Crucified, and on the imitation of His holiness . . . . .	129
50. Of the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist . . . . .	133
51. Of the manner in which to receive the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist . . . . .	134
52. How to prepare for communion, in order to excite within ourselves the love of God . . . . .	137
53. Of spiritual communion . . . . .	144
54. Of thanksgiving . . . . .	146
55. Of self-oblation . . . . .	147
56. Of sensible devotion and of dryness of spirit . . . . .	150
57. Of the examination of conscience . . . . .	154
58. How we must needs persevere in this combat, ever fighting, even unto death . . . . .	155
59. How to prepare ourselves against the enemies who assail us at the time of death . . . . .	157
60. Of four assaults of our enemies at the time of death; and first, of the assault upon our faith, and of the way to repel it . . . . .	158
61. Of the assault of despair, and its remedy . . . . .	159
62. Of the assault of vain-glory . . . . .	160
63. Of the assault of illusions and false appearances at the point of death . . . . .	161

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**SUPPLEMENT TO THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT.**

1. What constitutes Christian perfection . . . . .	163
2. How to fight in order to attain to Christian perfection . . . . .	164
3. Of three things necessary to the young soldier of Christ . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
4. Of resistance and violence, and the art of using them . . . . .	165
5. That we must continually watch over our will, in order to discover the passion to which it inclines . . . . .	167

CHAP.	PAGE
6. How by removing the first passion of the soul, which is love of the creature and of self, and giving it to God, all the others will continue well-ordered and regulated . . . . .	168
7. That the human will stands in need of assistance . . . . .	169
8. How the will of man is greatly assisted by victory over the world . . . . .	170
9. Of the second help to the will . . . . .	172
10. Of the temptations of spiritual pride . . . . .	173
11. Of the third help to the human will . . . . .	174
12. How a man may habitually, and as often as he will, place himself in the presence of God . . . . .	175
13. Some farther advice concerning prayer . . . . .	176
14. Of another mode of prayer . . . . .	177
15. Of the fourth help to the human will . . . . .	178
16. Of meditation on the being of a God . . . . .	179
17. Of meditation on the power of God . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
18. Of meditation on the wisdom of God . . . . .	180
19. Of meditation on the goodness of God . . . . .	181
20. Of meditation on the beauty of God . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
21. What God has done for man, and with what spirit, and what He would further do for him, if needful . . . . .	182
22. What God does for man daily . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
23. Of God's goodness to the sinner, in bearing with him and awaiting his return . . . . .	183
24. What God will do in the life to come, not for him only who has always served him, but for the converted sinner . . . . .	184
25. Of the fifth help to the human will . . . . .	186
26. How the love of self may be discerned . . . . .	<i>ib.</i>
27. Of the sixth help ; and first, of sacramental communion . . . . .	188
28. Of sacramental confession . . . . .	191
29. How to overcome impure passion . . . . .	192
30. How many things are to be avoided, that we fall not into this sin . . . . .	194
31. What is to be done when we have fallen into this sin . . . . .	195
32. Of some motives whereby the sinner may be induced to return speedily to God . . . . .	196

CHAP.	PAGE
33. How to obtain the gift of tears for thine offences against God, and the grace of conversion . . . . .	198
34. Of some reasons why men live without weeping for their sins against God, without holiness, and without Christian perfection . . . . .	200
35. Of love towards enemies . . . . .	203
36. Of the examination of conscience . . . . .	204
37. Two rules for living peaceably . . . . .	206

#### OF INWARD PEACE, OR, THE PATH TO PARADISE.

1. What is the nature of our heart, and how it should be governed . . . . .	208
2. Of the care to be taken in order to acquire a peaceful spirit . . . . .	209
3. How by little and little this peaceful habitation is to be built up . . . . .	210
4. That the soul must refuse all contentment; for this is the true humility and poverty of spirit by which this peace of the soul is obtained . . . . .	211
5. How the soul must keep herself in mental solitude, that God may work within her . . . . .	213
6. Of the prudence by which the love of our neighbour should be regulated, lest it disturb this peace . . . . .	215
7. How the soul, stripped of her own will, should present herself before God . . . . .	217
8. Of the faith we should have in the most holy sacrament of the altar; and of the offering we should make of ourselves unto the Lord . . . . .	220
9. That we ought not to seek enjoyment, nor anything which gives pleasure; but God only . . . . .	221
10. That God's servant must not lose heart, though he feel within himself some repugnance and disinclination towards this peace . . . . .	223

**CONTENTS.**

**XXXI**

<b>CHAP.</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
11. Of the pains the devil takes to disturb this peace, and how we should guard ourselves from his wiles .	224
12. That the soul must not disquiet itself because of inward temptations . . . . .	227
13. That temptations are given to us by God for our good .	228
14. Of the remedy to be used against uneasiness under faults and failures . . . . .	232
15. How the soul should, without losing time, quiet herself, and make progress . . . . .	235

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Maxims for the guidance of a soul that wishes to love Jesus Christ perfectly . . . . .	237
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# THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT.

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A man is not crowned except he strive lawfully.

—2 TIM. ii. 5.

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## CHAPTER I.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CHRISTIAN PERFECTION. WE MUST FIGHT IN ORDER TO ATTAIN IT: OF THE FOUR THINGS NECESSARY FOR THIS COMBAT.

Dost thou seek, dearest daughter in Christ, to attain the highest point of perfection, and by approaching ever nearer and nearer to thy God, to become one spirit with Him? The enterprize thou undertakest is the greatest and most noble which can be imagined or expressed; but thou hast first to learn wherein consists the true perfection of the Spiritual Life.

Many, to the neglect of all besides, have made it to consist in an ascetic life, in maceration of the flesh, in hair shirts and discipline, in long vigils and fasts, and the like severe bodily austerities.

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Others, especially women, think they have attained very far, when they say many prayers, hear many long services, and frequent churches and communions.

Others again (among whom may be found not a few who wear the religious habit, and dwell in the cloister) are persuaded, that perfection depends entirely on constant attendance in the Choir, on silence, solitude, and conformity to their rule.

And thus some hold perfection to consist in these, some, in other actions of a similar kind.

This, however, is not the truth; for, inasmuch as the above-mentioned works are, sometimes, the means of obtaining increase of the Spirit, sometimes the fruits thereof, it cannot be said that in these alone consists Christian perfection and the true life of the Spirit.

They are doubtless most effectual means of obtaining increase of the Spirit in the case of those who use them well and discreetly, in order to obtain new strength and vigour in the conflict with their own sinfulness and frailty; to arm them against the assaults and deceits of our common enemies; and to furnish them with those spiritual aids, which are so needful to all the servants of God, and more especially to those who have but lately entered into His service.

Again, they are the fruits of the Spirit in persons truly spiritual, who chastise the body because it has offended its Creator; and in order to keep it humble and submissive in His service; who keep silence and live in solitude, that their conversation may be in Heaven, and that they may not offend their Lord in any matter, however trifling; who attend Divine

worship and all offices of piety, pray and meditate upon the Life and Passion of our Lord, not out of mere feeling or curiosity, but that they may know more and more deeply their own sinfulness, and the goodness and mercy of God; may kindle more and more in their hearts the love of God, and the hatred of self; following the Son of God by denying themselves, and taking up the cross; who frequent the most holy Sacraments to the glory of His Divine Majesty, that they may be more closely united with God, and may gather new strength to resist their enemies.

To others, however, who build upon these alone, such outward works may sometimes, not from any fault in themselves, (for they are most holy,) but from the faults of those who practise them, become a more certain occasion of ruin, than open sins; because, intent on those actions only, such persons leave their hearts unguarded, at the mercy of their own inclinations, and open to the secret wiles of the Devil. Satan, seeing them already out of the right road, not only suffers them to pursue these exercises with satisfaction, but in their own vain fancy to expatiate in the delights of Paradise, where they imagine that they are borne aloft among choirs of angels, and feel God within them. At times, also, these persons find themselves wholly absorbed in high, mysterious, and ecstatic meditations, and lost, as it were, to the world and all creatures, deem themselves caught up into the third heaven.

But how far these men are from the perfection which we are seeking, and in how many and grievous errors they are entangled, may be easily seen in their life and conversation.

For in all things, little as well as great, they desire to have the preference and advantage over others; they idolize their own wisdom, and obstinately follow their own will; whilst, blind to their own defects, they are busy and eager observers and malicious critics of the deeds and words of others.

But touch them, however gently, on the point on which they pride themselves, a certain vain estimation in which they hold themselves and delight to be held by others; bid them lay aside any of their formal and stated services, forthwith they are filled with indignation, and are beyond measure disconcerted.

And if God, in order to bring them to a true knowledge of themselves and of the way of perfection, send them pain or weakness, or permit persecutions to overtake them, (which are the touchstone of His servants' loyalty, and never come upon them but by His command, and with His permission,) then is discovered the insecure foundation on which their spiritual house rests; then is its interior laid bare, all ruined and defaced by pride; for they will not resign themselves to God's Will, nor humble themselves under His Hand, acquiescing in His ever-just though secret judgments, in all circumstances which may befall them, joyful or sorrowful; neither will they, after the pattern of His Only Begotten Son in His humiliation and suffering, abase themselves below all creatures, counting their persecutors as dear friends, as instruments of Divine mercy, working together for the mortification, perfection, and salvation of their souls.

Hence is it a thing most certain, that such persons stand in imminent danger. For having their inward

eye darkened, and therewith contemplating self, and these their outward works, (in themselves good,) they attribute to themselves high degrees of perfection; and thus, exalted in their own estimation, they judge others, while their own conversion (unless God vouchsafe to them some extraordinary assistance) is well nigh hopeless.

For this reason may the open sinner be more easily converted and brought back, than he who is veiled and hidden from himself by the mantle of seeming virtues.

Thou seest then, my daughter, plainly enough, as I have now made plain to thee, that the Spiritual Life consisteth not in these things.

The Spiritual Life consists in nothing else than this, in the knowledge of the Goodness and Greatness of God, and of our own nothingness and proneness to all evil; in love of Him and hatred of ourselves; in subjection, not to Him alone, but for love of Him to every creature; in entire renunciation of our own will, and absolute resignation to His Divine good pleasure; and moreover, in doing and willing all these things, simply to glorify God, and solely to please Him, because such is His will, and because He deserves so to be loved and served.

This is the law of love, imprinted by the Hand of the Lord Himself on the hearts of His faithful servants.

This is the self-denial which He requires of us. This is His easy yoke and light burthen.

This is the obedience to which our Redeemer and Master calls us, both by His voice and His example.

And because, in aspiring to such a height of perfection, thou must needs do continual violence to

thyself, in order to fight manfully and to annihilate thine own will in all things, little or great, therefore shouldest thou prepare thee for this conflict with all readiness of mind, knowing that none but valiant combatants shall receive the crown.

Inasmuch then as this is of all conflicts the hardest, (for whilst we are striving against ourselves, we are striven against *by* ourselves,) so shall the victory, when obtained, be of all conquests the most glorious, and the most precious in the sight of God.

For if thou canst succeed in trampling under foot and destroying all thine unruly appetites, desires, and wishes, even the slightest of them, thou wilt render a more acceptable service to God, than if, while voluntarily suffering one of them to live, thou shouldest scourge thyself unto blood, or shouldest fast more rigorously than hermits and anchorites of old, or convert millions of souls.

The conversion of souls is doubtless in itself more precious to the Lord than the mortification of a slight wish; nevertheless, thy part is to will and to do that, first and chiefly, which the Lord specially wills and requires of thee.

And He will infallibly be better pleased that thou shouldest watch and strive to mortify thy passions, than if, knowingly and wilfully, leaving even one alive within thee, thou shouldest zealously serve Him in any matter whatsoever, though of greater dignity and importance.

Now, dear daughter, that thou seest wherein Christian perfection consists, and that in order to acquire it, thou hast to undertake a constant and unrelenting warfare against thyself; thou must provide thee with four things as most sure and neces-

sary weapons, by which to win the palm, and secure the victory in this spiritual combat. These are :—

Mistrust of Self.

Trust in God.

Spiritual Exercises, and  
Prayer.

Of all which we shall, with the Divine assistance, treat briefly and plainly.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF MISTRUST OF SELF.

IN this conflict, my daughter, so necessary to thee is mistrust of self, that unless thou be furnished with it, thou wilt assuredly be unable not only to gain the victory, but even to overcome thy very slightest passion.

And let this be well impressed on thy mind, inasmuch as our corrupt nature too easily disposes us to a false esteem of ourselves ; so that while we are in reality a mere nothing, we flatter ourselves that we are something, and, without the slightest foundation, presume vainly on our own strength.

This is a defect not easily discerned by ourselves, and one which is very displeasing in the sight of God. For He loves and desires to see in us a true and hearty recognition of this most certain truth, that all grace and virtue in us is derived from Him Alone, The Fountain of all good, and that from ourselves can proceed nothing, no not even a good thought, which may find favour in His Sight.

And although this very mistrust of self, which is of such moment, is itself the work of His Divine Hand, Who is wont to bestow it upon His beloved, one while, by means of holy inspirations, or again by keen chastisements, by violent and almost irresistible temptations, or by other methods, incomprehensible to us, yet is it His will that we, on our part, should do what in us lies to work together with Him. I will therefore lay before thee four methods by which, in dependence, above all things, on the aid of the grace of God, such mistrust of self may be acquired.

The first is to consider and know thine own vileness and nothingness, how of thyself thou canst do no good thing, whereby to merit an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The second, to implore the Lord for it, with fervent and humble prayer; for it is His gift. And in order to its attainment thou must first regard thyself as not only destitute of it, but as utterly powerless of thyself to acquire it. Therefore present thyself often before the Divine Majesty, with an assured faith that He is willing of His great goodness to grant thy petition; wait patiently all the time which His Providence appoints; and without any doubt thou shalt obtain it.

The third is, to be accustomed to fear thyself, thine own judgment, thy strong inclination to sin, the numberless enemies against whom thou art unable to make the slightest resistance; their long practice in war, their stratagems, their transformation into angels of light, and the innumerable arts and snares wherewith, in the very way of godliness, they secretly endeavour to entangle us.

The fourth—whenever thou art overtaken by any



fault, to look more into thyself, and to consider more deeply thine own utter weakness. For to this end did God permit thy fall, that, warned by a clearer light of inspiration than before, and by true knowledge of self, thou mightest learn to despise thyself as a thing most vile, and be willing to be so regarded by others, and despised accordingly. For without this willingness there can be no godly mistrust of self, which has its foundation in true humility, and in the experimental self-knowledge of which we have been speaking.

Self-knowledge is, indeed, plainly necessary to all who seek after an union with the Supreme Light and Uncreated Truth, and Divine clemency frequently makes use of the falls of proud and presumptuous men to lead them to this knowledge; justly suffering them to run into some fault, which they trusted to their own strength to avoid, that so, coming to a knowledge of themselves, they may learn to distrust self in all things.

The Lord is not, however, wont to employ so sad a method, until those more gracious means of which we have before spoken, have failed to work the good which His Divine Mercy intended.

He permits a man to fall more or less deeply, in proportion to the height of his pride and self-esteem, so that wherever there should be (as in the Blessed Virgin Mary) no presumption, there also would be no fall.

Therefore, whensoever thou dost fall, at once betake thee humbly to know thyself as thou art, and with earnest prayer entreat the Lord to give thee light truly to know thyself, and entire mistrust of self, lest thou fall again, it may be, into a deeper ruin.

## CHAPTER III.

## OF TRUST IN GOD.

**MISTRUST** of self, necessary as it is and as we have described it to be in this conflict, is not alone sufficient. Unless we would be put to flight, or remain vanquished and helpless in the hands of our enemies, we must add to it perfect trust in God, hoping and expecting from Him Alone, all aid, victory, and good whatsoever.

For, inasmuch as we, who are nothing, can look to ourselves for nothing but falls, and therefore should utterly mistrust ourselves; so from our Lord may we assuredly expect complete victory in every conflict. Therefore, in order to obtain His succour, let us arm our hearts with a lively confidence in Him.

And this also may be accomplished in four ways.

1st, By beseeching it of God.

2nd, By gazing intently with the eye of faith at the Infinite Wisdom and Omnipotence of God, to Whom nothing is impossible or difficult, and by considering that His goodness is unbounded, and unspeakable His willingness to give, hour by hour, and moment by moment, all things needful for the spiritual life and for complete victory over self, if we will throw ourselves with confidence into His Arms.

Our Divine Shepherd followed after His lost sheep for three and thirty years with loud and bitter cries, in a way so painful and so thorny, that He spilt His Heart's Blood and left His life there. The poor sheep now follows Him through obedience to His commands, or through a desire (though at times but faint) to obey Him, calling upon Him and beseeching

Him earnestly for help ; is it possible that He should now refuse to turn upon it His life-giving look ? Will He not give ear to it, and lay it upon His Divine Shoulders, rejoicing over it with all His friends, and with the Angels of Heaven ?

For if our Lord ceased not to search most diligently and lovingly for the blind and deaf sinner, the lost drachma of the Gospel, till He found it, how is it possible that He should abandon him who, as a lost sheep, cries and calls upon his Shepherd ?

And if God knocks continually at the heart of man, desiring to enter in and sup there, and to communicate to him His gifts, who can believe that when the heart opens and invites Him to enter, He will really become deaf to the invitation, and refuse to come in ?

3rd, The third way of acquiring this holy confidence, is to call to mind that truth so plainly taught us in many passages of Holy Scripture, that none who have trusted in God have ever been confounded.

4th, The fourth, which will serve at once for the attainment of mistrust in self, and of trust in God, is this :—When any thing occurs to thee to be done, any struggle with self to be undertaken, any victory over self to be attempted, before thou propose or resolve upon it, first think upon thine own weakness ; next, filled with mistrust of self, turn to the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God, and in reliance upon these, resolve to labour and fight manfully. Then with these arms in thine hands, and with prayer (of which we shall speak in its place) fight and labour.

Unless thou observe this order, though thou seem to thyself to be doing every thing in reliance upon

God, thou wilt too often find thyself mistaken; for so common to man is a presumptuous reliance on self, and so subtle, that it lurks almost always even under our imagined mistrust of self and the trust we think we have in God.

That thou mayest, as much as possible, avoid presumption, and that all thy works may be wrought in mistrust of self and trust in God, the consideration of thine own weakness must precede the consideration of the Omnipotence of God, and both these considerations must precede all thine undertakings.

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## CHAPTER IV.

HOW A MAN MAY KNOW WHETHER HE IS ACTING  
IN MISTRUST OF SELF, AND TRUST IN GOD.

THE presumptuous servant often imagines that he has attained to mistrust of self and trust in God, when it is not so.

And this will be made clear to thee by the effect which a fall produces on thy mind.

If, then, when thou fallest, thou art so saddened and disquieted, as to be tempted to despair of advancing and doing well, this is a sure sign that thou trustest in thyself and not in God.

And this sadness and despondency will be the greater, by how much thou hast trusted to thyself and distrusted God. For he who has any large measure of mistrust of self and trust in God, feels neither surprise, nor despondency, nor bitterness, when he falls, knowing that this has been brought upon him

by his own weakness and want of trust in God. On the contrary, more mistrustful of self, more humbly trustful in God, he pursues his enterprize, and follows after his enemies to the death, with a spirit more undaunted and resolute than before; hating, above all things, his fault, and the unruly passions which have occasioned his fall; and mourning, with a deep and quiet and patient sorrow, over his offence against God.

I would that these things were well considered by certain persons laying claim to spirituality; who, when they have fallen into any fault, cannot and will not be at rest. They hurry to their spiritual father, rather to free themselves from the anxiety and uneasiness which spring from wounded self-love, than to purify themselves from the stain of sin, and to fortify themselves against its power, by means of the most holy Sacrament<sup>1</sup> of Absolution, which should be their chief reason for resorting to him.

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## CHAPTER V.

### OF THE ERROR OF MANY, WHO MISTAKE FEAR FOR GODLINESS.

THERE are also many persons who deceive themselves in this manner. They mistake the uneasiness and fear consequent upon sin for virtuous emotions; and know not that these feelings, painful as they are, spring from wounded pride and presumption, founded on confidence in self. Thinking themselves to be

<sup>1</sup> [As Marriage is so called in the Homilies].

something, they have unduly relied upon their own strength. Their fall proves to them the vanity of such reliance, and then they are troubled and astonished as at some strange thing, and are disheartened to see the support on which they had rashly placed their confidence, sink to the ground.

This never happens to the humble man, who confiding in his God Alone, presumes in nothing upon himself. Though grieved when he falls into any fault, he is neither surprised nor disquieted, for he knows that his own misery and weakness, already clearly manifest to himself by the light of truth, have brought all this upon him.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### FURTHER ADVICE AS TO THE ATTAINMENT OF MISTRUST OF SELF AND TRUST IN GOD.

BECAUSE our whole power to subdue our enemies arises chiefly from mistrust of self and trust in God, I will furnish thee with some farther advice, that thou mayest (by Divine Assistance) attain unto it.

Know, then, and hold for certain, that not all talents, natural or acquired, nor all graces freely bestowed, nor the knowledge of all Scripture, nor long practice in God's service, will enable us to do His Will; unless in every good and acceptable work to be performed, in every temptation to be overcome, in every peril to be avoided, in every cross to be borne conformably to His Will, our heart be supported and elevated by His especial aid, and His Hand be stretched out to help us.

We must then bear this in mind throughout our whole life, every day, every hour, every moment, that we may never indulge so much as a thought of confidence in self.

And as to confidence in God, know that it is as easy to Him to conquer many enemies as few, the old and expert as the weak and inexperienced.

Therefore we will suppose a soul to be heavy laden with sins; to have every possible fault and every imaginable failing; and to have tried, by every possible means and the practice of every godly exercise, to forsake sin and to work righteousness. We will suppose her to have done all this, and yet to have failed in making the smallest advance in holiness; nay, on the contrary to have run the more eagerly after evil. Nevertheless, she must not on this account lose her trust in God, nor give over her spiritual warfare and exercises, but still fight resolutely on, knowing that in this spiritual combat none is overcome but he who ceases to struggle and to trust in God. His aid never fails His soldiers, though He sometimes permit them to be wounded. Fight on then boldly, for on this depends the whole issue. For there is a ready and effectual remedy to heal the wounds of all combatants, who look confidently to God and to His aid for succour; and when they least expect it, they shall see their enemies dead at their feet.

## CHAPTER VII.

OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISE, AND FIRST OF THE UNDERSTANDING, WHICH MUST BE GUARDED AGAINST IGNORANCE AND CURIOSITY.

IF mistrust of self, and trust in God, needful as they are in this conflict, be our only weapons, we shall not only fail to gain the victory over ourselves, but shall fall into many evils. To these we must therefore add spiritual exercise, the third thing mentioned above.

This exercise relates chiefly to the understanding and to the will.

As to the understanding, we must be on our guard against two things which are apt to obscure it.

One is ignorance, which clouds and obstructs the knowledge of truth, the proper object of the understanding. Therefore must it be made clear and bright by exercise, that so it may be able to see and discern plainly all that is needful for purifying the soul from unruly passions, and adorning it with saintly virtues.

This light may be obtained in two ways. The first and chiefest is prayer, imploring the Holy Spirit to pour it into our hearts. This He will always do, if we in truth seek God Alone, and the fulfilment of His holy Will; and if in all things we submit our own judgment to that of our spiritual father.

The other is, to exercise constantly a deep and faithful consideration of all things; to see whether they be good or evil, according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and not according to their outward



appearance, as they impress the senses, or are judged of by the world.

This consideration, if rightly exercised, will teach us to regard as vanity and falsehood, all which the blind and corrupt world loves, and desires, and seeks after, in so many various ways. It will show us plainly that the honours and pleasures of earth are but vanity and vexation of spirit; that injury and infamy inflicted on us by the world, bring true glory; and tribulations, contentment; that to pardon our enemies, and to do them good, is true magnanimity, and one of the acts which most likens us to God; that to despise the world is better than to be its master; that voluntary obedience, for the love of God, to the meanest of His creatures, is an act more great and noble than authority over mighty princes; that lowly self-knowledge is more to be prized than the highest attainments of science; and that the mortification and victory over our own appetites, however trifling, is more praiseworthy than the storming of strong cities, the defeat of mighty armies, the working of miracles, or the raising of the dead.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE CAUSES WHICH HINDER US FROM A RIGHT DISCERNMENT OF THINGS, AND OF THE METHOD WHICH WE MUST ADOPT FOR ENABLING US TO UNDERSTAND THEM ARIGHT.

THE reason that we do not rightly discern all the things above-mentioned, and many others also, is, that we conceive a hatred or a love of them on their

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first appearance. By this means our understanding is clouded, so that it cannot judge of them rightly.

Lest thou fall into this delusion, be well advised, as far as possible, to keep thy will pure, and free from inordinate affection for anything whatsoever.

When any object then is presented to thee, view it with thine understanding, and consider it maturely, before thou be moved by hatred to refuse it, if it be a thing contrary to thine inclinations, or by love to desire it, if it be a thing pleasing to them.

For then the understanding, being unclouded by passion, will be free, and clear, and able to perceive the truth, and to discover the evil which lurks behind delusive pleasure, and the good which is veiled under the semblance of evil.

But if the will be first bent to love or to hate anything, the understanding will be unable to exercise a right judgment upon it. For this affection, which will thus have intruded itself, so obscures the understanding, that it sees the object as other than it is; and so representing it to the will, influences it, contrary to every rule and law of reason, to love or to hate it with a greater intensity than before.

By this affection the understanding gradually comes to be more and more darkened; and, thus darkened, it makes the thing seem more than ever hateful or lovely to the will.

Hence if the rule here laid down be not observed, (a rule which is of the utmost importance in the exercise of which we have been speaking,) these two faculties, the understanding and the will, noble and excellent as they are, will soon sink downwards, in a miserable round, from darkness into thicker darkness, and from error into deeper error.

Guard thyself most vigilantly then, my daughter, from all unruly affection for anything whatsoever, the true character whereof thou shalt not have first examined and tested by the light of the understanding, and chiefly by that of grace and of prayer, and by the judgment of thy spiritual father.

And this I would have thee observe the more carefully with regard to any outward works which are good and holy, because in these, as such, more than in other acts, there is the greater danger, on our part, of deception and indiscretion.

Hence thou mayest take no little hurt from some circumstance of time, or place, or degree, or respect for authority; as is known to many who have incurred great danger in the practice of commendable and most holy exercises.

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## CHAPTER IX.

OF ANOTHER THING FROM WHICH THE UNDERSTANDING MUST BE GUARDED, TO ENABLE IT TO DISCERN THINGS RIGHTLY.

THE second thing from which we must guard our understanding is curiosity; because, by filling it with hurtful, vain, and impertinent thoughts, we incapacitate and disable it from apprehending that which most nearly concerns our true mortification and perfection.

To this end, thou must be as one dead to all needless enquiries concerning earthly things, though lawful.

Ever restrain thine intellect as much as possible, and love to keep it low.

Let the news and the changes of the world, great and small, be to thee as though they were not ; and should they come before thee, reject them, and drive them far from thee.

Be sober and humble, even in thy desire to understand heavenly things, wishing to know nothing but Christ Crucified, His Life, and His Death, and whatsoever He requires of thee.

Cast all other things far from thee, and thus shalt thou be very pleasing unto God. For He loves and delights in those who desire and seek of Him such things alone as suffice to the love of His Divine Goodness, and the doing His Will. Every other request and enquiry is self-love, pride, and a snare of the devil.

If thou wilt follow these instructions thou wilt escape many dangers ; for when the wily serpent sees the will of those who aim at the spiritual life strong and resolute, he attacks their understanding, that so he may be able to master both the one and the other.

He therefore frequently infuses lofty and curious sentiments into their minds, especially if they be of an acute and subtle character, and such as are easily lifted up into pride ; that occupied with the enjoyment and discussion of such matters, in which they falsely persuade themselves they enjoy God, they may neglect to purify their hearts, and to apply themselves to self-knowledge and real mortification. So, falling into the snare of pride, they make an idol of their own understanding.

Hence by little and little, and imperceptibly, they

persuade themselves that they have no need of advice or control from others, being accustomed already, in all circumstances, to have recourse to the idol of their own judgment.

A most perilous case this, and very hard to cure, the pride of the understanding being more dangerous than that of the will; for when the pride of the will is once perceived by the understanding, it may one day be easily remedied by submission to those who should have the rule over it; but how or by whom can he be cured, who obstinately believes that his own opinion is worth more than that of others? How shall he submit to other men's judgment, which he considers so far inferior to his own?

The understanding is the eye of the soul, by which the wound of the proud will should be discovered, and cleansed; if that eye, then, itself be weak, and blind, and swollen with pride, by whom shall it be healed?

And if the light become darkness, and the rule faulty, what will become of the rest?

Therefore resist this perilous pride betimes, before it penetrate into the marrow of thy bones.

Blunt the acuteness of thine intellect; submit thine own opinion willingly to that of others; become a fool for the love of God, and thou shalt be wiser than Solomon.

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## CHAPTER X.

OF THE EXERCISE OF THE WILL, AND OF THE END TO WHICH ALL ACTIONS, WHETHER EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL, SHOULD TEND.

BESIDES this needful exercise of the understanding,

thou must so regulate thy will, that it be not left to follow its own desires, but be in all things conformed to the Divine pleasure.

And remember, that it is not enough only to will and strive after those things which are most pleasing to God ; but, yet further, thou must so will and do them, as being moved thereto by Him, and with a view to please Him Alone.

In this exercise of the will, even more than in that of the understanding, we shall meet with strong opposition from nature, which seeks itself and its own ease and pleasure in all things ; but especially in those of a holy and spiritual nature. With these it delights itself, feeding on them with avidity, as on wholesome food.

As soon as they are presented to us, we look longingly upon them, and desire them ; not in accordance with the will of God, nor with the sole view of pleasing Him, but for the sake of the benefit and satisfaction we ourselves desire from willing those things which God wills.

This delusion is the more subtle, as the thing desired is, in itself, the more excellent. Hence, even in the desire after God Himself, we are exposed to the delusions of self-love, which often leads us to look more to our own interests, and to the benefits we expect from God, than to His Will, Whose pleasure it is, that we love, and desire, and obey Him, for His own glory alone.

I will now show thee a way to avoid this snare, which would impede thee in the path of perfection ; and to accustom thyself to will and do all things as moved by the Spirit of God ; and with the pure intention of honouring and pleasing Him Alone, Who desires to be

the sole Principle and End of our every word and action. When any thing is presented to thee as willed by God, do not allow thyself to will it, till thou have first raised thy thoughts to Him, to discover whether He willeth thee to will it, and because He so wills it, and to please Him Alone.

Let thy will, thus moved and attracted by His, be then bent upon willing it, because He wills it, and with the sole view of pleasing and honouring Him.

In like manner, wouldest thou refuse things which are contrary to God's will, refuse them not till thou shalt first have fixed the eye of thy mind upon His Divine Will, which wills thee to refuse them solely for the sake of pleasing Him.

Thou must know, however, that the frauds and crafts of wily nature are but little known; for, ever secretly seeking herself, she often leads us to fancy that our end and motive is to please God, when it is far otherwise.

Thus it often happens, that when we choose or refuse anything for our own interest or satisfaction, we imagine that we are choosing or refusing it, in the hope of pleasing, or in the fear of displeasing God.

The true and effectual remedy for this delusion is purity of heart, which consists in that which is, indeed, the aim and object of all this spiritual combat, —the "putting off the old, and putting on the new man."

And to this end, seeing thou art full of self, take care in the beginning of every action to free thyself as much as possible from all admixture of any thing which seems to be thine own. Choose nothing, do

nothing, refuse nothing, unless thou feel thyself moved and drawn thereto by the pure and simple Will of God.

If thou canst not always feel thyself thus actuated, especially in the inward workings of the mind, and in outward actions which are but transient, thou must be content to have this motive ever virtually present with thee ; always maintaining a pure intention of pleasing thy God Alone in all things.

But in actions of longer duration, it is well to excite within thyself this motive, not only at the beginning, but also to be careful to renew it frequently, and to keep it alive to the end. Otherwise thou wilt be in danger of falling into another snare, springing also from our natural self-love, which, as it is always more inclined and yielding to self than to God, often causes us, in the course of time, to change unconsciously our objects and our aims.

The servant of God, who is not warned against this danger, often begins a work with the single thought of pleasing his Lord Alone, but soon, little by little, and almost imperceptibly, he begins to take such pleasure in his work, that he loses sight of the Divine Will, and follows his own. He dwells so much on the satisfaction he feels in what he is doing, and on the benefit and honour to be derived therefrom, that if God Himself place some impediment in his way, either by sickness or accident, or through the agency of man, he is instantly troubled and disquieted, and often falls to murmuring against the impediment, whatever it be ; nay, one might say, against God Himself. A clear proof that his intention was not wholly of God, but sprang from an evil root and a corrupted source.



For he who acts only as moved by God, and with a view to please Him Alone, desires not one thing above another. He wishes to have that only, which it pleases God that he should have, and at the time and in the way which may be most agreeable to Him; and whether he have it or not, he is equally tranquil and contented, because in either case he obtains his wish, and fulfils his intention, which was no other than purely to please God.

Therefore, recollect thyself seriously, and take care always to direct every action to this perfect end.

And even if the bent of thy natural disposition move thee to do good from fear of the pains of hell, or hope of the joys of paradise, thou mayest even here propose to thyself, as thine ultimate end, the Will and Pleasure of God, Who desires not that thou shouldest enter into hell, but into His Kingdom.

It is not in man fully to apprehend the force and virtue of this motive; for an action, how insignificant soever, done with a view to please God Alone, and for His sole Glory, is far more precious, (if we may so say,) than many others of the greatest value and importance, springing from motives short of this.

Hence a single penny given to a poor man, with the sole desire to please His Divine Majesty, is more acceptable to God, than the entire forsaking of all one's worldly goods for any other end, even for the attainment of the blessedness of heaven, an end not only good, but supremely desirable.

This exercise of doing all things with the single aim of pleasing God Alone, seems hard at first, but will become plain and easy by practice, if with the warmest affections of the heart we desire God Alone, and long for Him as our only and most perfect Good,

Who deserves that all creatures should seek Him for Himself, and serve Him and love Him above all things.

The deeper and the more constant are our meditations upon His infinite Worthiness, the more fervent and the more frequent will be these exercises of the will; and we shall thus acquire, more easily and more speedily, the habit of performing every action from pure love to that gracious Lord, Who Alone is worthy of our love and reverence.

Lastly, in order to the attainment of this divine motive, I advise thee to seek it of God by importunate prayer, and to meditate frequently upon the innumerable benefits which He, out of His pure and disinterested Love, has bestowed upon us.

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## CHAPTER XI.

OF SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY INCLINE THE WILL TO SEEK TO PLEASE GOD IN ALL THINGS.

FURTHERMORE, to incline the will, with the greater readiness, to seek in all things the Honour of God and His Pleasure, ever remember, that in many and various ways He hath first loved and honoured thee.

In creation, by creating thee out of nothing, after His Likeness, and all other creatures for thy service.

In redemption, by sending, not an angel, but His Only Begotten Son to redeem thee, "not with the corruptible price of silver and gold, but with His Precious Blood," and by His most painful and

**ignominious Death.** Remember that every hour, nay every moment, He protects thee from thine enemies, fights for thee by His Grace, offers thee continually in the Sacrament of the Altar His Well-Beloved Son, to be thy Food, and thy Shield: is not all this a token of the inestimable regard and love borne to thee by the Infinite God? It is not in man to conceive, on the one hand, the value which so great a Lord sets upon us poor wretches, upon our lowliness and misery; and on the other, how great the return we are bound to make to His supreme Majesty, Who has done so many and so great things for us.

For if earthly lords, when honoured even by poor and lowly men, feel bound to honour them in return, how should our vile nature demean itself towards the Supreme King of heaven and earth, by Whom we are so dearly loved and so highly prized!

And besides all this, and before all things, keep ever vividly in mind, that the Divine Majesty is infinitely worthy to be honoured for Himself Alone, and to be served purely for His own good pleasure.

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## CHAPTER XII.

OF THE DIVERS WILLS THAT ARE IN MAN, AND  
OF THE WARFARE BETWEEN THEM.

**ALTHOUGH** we may be said, in this combat, to have within us two wills, the one of the reason, which is thence called rational and superior, the other of the senses, thence called sensual and inferior, and com-

monly described by the words "appetite," "flesh," "sense," and "passion;" yet as it is the reason which constitutes us men, we cannot truly be said to will any thing which is willed by the senses, unless we be also inclined thereto by the superior will.

And herein does our spiritual conflict principally consist. The reasonable will, being placed, as it were, midway between the Divine Will, which is above it, and the inferior will or the will of the senses, which is beneath it, is continually warring against both, each seeking in turn to draw it and subdue it and bring it under obedience.

Much hard toil and trouble must, however, be undergone, especially at the outset, by the unpractised, when they resolve to amend their evil lives, and renouncing the world and the flesh, give themselves up to the love and service of Jesus Christ.

For the opposition which their superior will meets with from the continual warfare that goes on between the Divine and sensual will, is sharp and severe, and not to be borne without acute suffering.

It is not so with those who are well practised in the way of virtue or of vice; they pursue without difficulty the path on which they have entered, the virtuous yielding readily to the Divine Will, and the vicious yielding without resistance to the will of the senses.

But let none think it possible to persevere in the practice of true Christian graces, or to serve God as He should be served, unless he be willing in good earnest to do violence to himself, and to endure the pain of parting with all pleasant things whatsoever, whether great or small, to which his earthly affections had bound him.

Hence is it that so few attain to perfection; for after having with much toil overcome the greater vices, they will not persevere in doing violence to themselves, by enduring the continual pricking of an infinity of lesser fancies and desires. They grow weary of so unremitting a struggle; they suffer these insignificant enemies to prevail against them, and so to acquire an absolute mastery over their hearts.

Of this class are men who, if they do not take what belongs to others, cleave with an inordinate affection to that which is lawfully their own. If they do not obtain honours by unlawful means, yet they do not, as they ought, abhor them; but, on the contrary, cease not to desire them, and even at times to seek them in divers ways. If they observe fasts of obligation, yet they do not mortify their palate in the matter of superfluous eating, or the indulgence of delicate morsels. If they live continently, yet they do not renounce many indulgences which much impede union with God, and the growth of the spiritual life; and which, as they are very perilous to all persons, however holy, and most perilous to those who least fear them, should by all persons be as much as possible avoided.

Hence it follows, that all their good works are performed in a lukewarm spirit, and accompanied by much self-seeking and many lurking imperfections, and by a certain kind of self-esteem and desire to be appreciated and applauded by the world.

Such persons not only fail to make any progress in the way of salvation, but rather, by thus going back, are in danger of relapsing into their former sins, because they have no love of true holiness, and show little thankfulness to their Lord Who rescued them from the devil's tyranny; they are, moreover, too

blind and ignorant to see the peril in which they stand, while they falsely persuade themselves of the security of their condition.

And here we discover a delusion, so much the more hurtful, as it is the less apprehended, in that many who aspire to the spiritual life, being (though, in truth, they know it not) greater lovers of themselves than is befitting, practise, for the most part, those exercises which suit their taste, and neglect others which touch to the quick their natural inclinations and their sensual appetites, against which they should, in all reason, direct the whole brunt of the battle.

Therefore, dear daughter, I counsel and exhort thee to be in love with pain and difficulty, for they will bring with them that which is the end and object of the whole struggle—victory over self. The surer and the speedier shall be this victory, the more deeply thou art in love with the difficulties which virtue and war offer to beginners; and if thy love be to the difficulty and to the toilsome struggle, rather than to the victory and the virtue to be attained, thou shalt the more speedily obtain all that thou desirest.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE WAY TO RESIST THE IMPULSES OF SENSE,  
AND OF THE ACTS TO BE PERFORMED BY THE  
WILL, IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE HABITS OF HOLI-  
NESS.

WHENEVER thy reasonable will is laid claim to by

the will of sense on the one hand, and by the Divine Will on the other, whilst each seeks to obtain the victory, thou must exercise thyself in various ways, in order that the Divine Will may in all things overrule thee.

First. Whenever thou art assailed and buffeted by the impulses of sense, thou must make a brave resistance, so that the superior will consent not to them.

Secondly. When the assaults have ceased, excite them anew, in order to repress them with greater force and vigour.

Then challenge them again to a third conflict, wherein thou shalt accustom thyself to repulse them with disdain and abhorrence.

These two challenges to battle should be made to every unruly appetite, except in the case of temptations of the flesh, concerning which we will speak in their place.

Lastly, thou shouldest make acts contrary to each evil passion to be resisted.

This will be made more clear to thee by the following example.

Thou art, perhaps, assailed by feelings of impatience. Look carefully into thyself, and thou wilt find that these feelings are constantly directed against the superior will, in order to win its consent.

Now, then, betake thee to the first exercise, and, by repeated acts of the will, do all in thy power to stifle each feeling as it arises, that thy will consent not thereunto.

And never desist from this warfare till thou see thine enemy, wearied unto death, yield himself vanquished.

But, behold here, my daughter, the malice of the devil. When he perceives that we resist stoutly the first stirrings of any passion, not only does he refrain from exciting them in us, but when excited, he strives for the time to allay them, lest by the practice of resisting the passion, we should acquire the habit of the opposite virtue. He would also fain betray us into the snares of pride and vain-glory, by subtilly insinuating to us, that, like valiant soldiers, we have soon trampled down our enemies.

Thou wilt therefore proceed to the second combat; recalling and exciting in thyself those thoughts which tempted thee to impatience, till thou feel thyself sensibly affected by them; then, with a stronger will, and more earnest endeavour than before, set thyself to repress every such feeling.

And because, however much we have resisted our enemies, from a sense of duty, and a desire to please God, we are still (unless we hold them in perfect detestation) in danger of being one day overcome by them—thou must therefore assault them a third time, and drive them from thee, with feelings, not of repugnance only, but of indignation, until they become odious and abominable in thine eyes.

Lastly, for the adorning and perfecting of thy soul in the habit of holiness, thou must exercise thyself in inward acts directly opposed to thine unruly passions.

Wouldest thou attain in perfection to the spirit of patience, if thou meet with any insult which gives cause for impatience, it will not suffice to exercise thyself in the three modes of conflict which I have described, but thou must do more; thou must willingly accept and love the indignity thou hast received,



desiring to submit to it again, from the same person, and in the same manner, awaiting and disposing thyself to bear still heavier trials.

These acts of the contrary virtues are needful to our perfection in holiness, because the first named exercises, how many and efficacious soever, will not suffice to extirpate the roots of sin.

Hence, (to pursue the same example,) although on receiving an insult, we do not yield to the feeling of impatience, but, on the contrary, strive against it by the three methods above-named; nevertheless, unless we accustom ourselves, by many and repeated acts of the will, to love contempt and to rejoice in it, we shall never be freed from the sin of impatience, which arises from a regard for our own reputation, and an abhorrence of contempt.

And if the root of the sin be left alive, it goes on springing up afresh, till holiness languishes, nay, sometimes is wholly choked by it; and it keeps us, moreover, in constant peril of relapsing, on the first opportunity which may present itself to us.

Hence it follows, that without these contrary acts we shall never acquire the true habit of holiness.

And remember, moreover, that such acts should be so frequent and so numerous, as utterly to destroy the sinful habit, which, as it has obtained possession of our heart by repeated acts of sin, so by repeated acts of holiness must it be dislodged, to make way for the habit of holiness.

Furthermore, more good actions are required to form a habit of holiness than evil ones to form a habit of sin, seeing that the former are not aided (as are the latter) by nature, this being corrupted by sin.

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I would add to all that has been said, that if the virtue, in which thou art now exercising thyself, so require, thou must also practise outward acts conformable to the inward ones, as (for example) using words of love and meekness, and, if possible, showing thyself complaisant to those who have in any way been annoying and contradictory to thee.

And though all such acts, whether outward or inward, be, or seem to thee to be attended by such faintness of spirit, as apparently to be done against thy will, yet must thou not in any wise neglect them, for, faint as they are, they will keep thee steady and secure in the battle, and smooth for thee the path to victory.

And be always so well prepared and self-possessed as to be ready to resist the demands of every passion, not such only as are violent and imperious, but the very slightest and gentlest, for these do but lead the way to greater ones, by which habits of sin are afterwards formed within us.

It has happened, from the little care which some men have taken to root out of their hearts these lesser desires, that even after having overcome the more violent assaults of the same passion, they have been, when they least expected, assailed more boldly by their old adversary, and have sustained a more absolute and ruinous defeat than before.

Further, remember from time to time to mortify and thwart thine own wishes, even in things lawful, but not necessary; for, from such discipline many benefits will follow; thou wilt be more and more prepared and disposed for self-mastery in other things; thou wilt become strong and expert in the

struggle with temptation ; thou wilt escape many snares of the devil, and perform a work well-pleasing unto the Lord.

My daughter, I speak plainly to thee ; if, after the manner which I have taught thee, thou wilt persevere faithfully in these loyal and holy exercises, for self-reformation and self-mastery, then do I promise thee, that in a short time thou wilt make great progress, and wilt become spiritual, not in name only, but in truth. But in no other manner, and by no other exercises, how excellent soever in thine estimation, yea, so full of delights to thy taste, that thou shouldest soon seem to be wholly absorbed in them, and to hold sweet colloquies with the Lord—by none of these do I bid thee hope ever to attain to true holiness and spirituality. For this consists not, (as I told thee in the first chapter,) nor is it produced by exercises which are pleasing to us and conformable to our nature, but by such only as nail that nature, with all its works, to the Cross ; and renewing the whole man by the practice of evangelical holiness, unite him to his Crucified Creator.

There can be no question, that as habits of sin are formed by many and frequent acts of the superior will, when it yields itself to the sway of the sensual appetites, so, on the contrary, habits of evangelical holiness are acquired by the performance of frequent and repeated acts of conformity to the Divine Will, by which we are called to the practice now of one virtue, now of another.

For as our will, however fiercely assailed by sin or by the suggestions of our lower nature, can never become sinful or earthly unless it yield or incline itself to the temptation ; so thou, however powerfully

called and assailed by Divine grace and heavenly inspirations, wilt never attain to holiness or to union with God, unless by inward, and, if needs be, by outward acts, thy will be made conformable to His.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT MUST BE DONE WHEN THE SUPERIOR WILL SEEMS TO BE WHOLLY STIFLED AND OVERCOME BY THE INFERIOR, AND BY OTHER ENEMIES.

IF at times the superior will seem to thee to be powerless against the inferior, and its other enemies, because thou feelest not within thee an effectual will against them; stand firm, notwithstanding, and do not quit the field, for thou must always reckon thyself victorious until thou canst clearly perceive that thou hast yielded.

For inasmuch as our superior will has no need of the inferior for the production of her own acts, so, unless she herself so wills, she can never be compelled to yield herself vanquished, however sorely assaulted.

For God has, in truth, endued our will with such freedom and such strength, that were all the senses, all the evil spirits, nay, the whole world itself, to arm and conspire to assault and oppress her with all their might, she could still, in spite of them, will or not will, all that she wills, or wills not, and that how often soever, whensoever, howsoever, and to what end soever best pleases her.

And if at any time thy foes so violently assail and press upon thee, that thy will is almost stifled, and

has (so to speak) no breath to produce any opposing act of volition, yet do not lose heart, nor throw down thine arms, but in this case make use of thy tongue in thy defence, saying,

“I yield not, I consent not,” after the manner of a man whose adversary is upon him, and holds him down, and who, unable to reach him with the point of his sword, strikes at him with the hilt.

And like as he tries to make a spring backwards to wound his enemy with the point, so do thou withdraw into the knowledge of thyself, the knowledge that thou art nothing, and canst do nothing; and with faith in God Who can do all things, strike a blow at this passion, thine enemy, saying, “Help me, Lord! help me, O my God! help me, Jesu! that I yield not unto it.”

Thou mayest also, when thine enemy gives thee time, call in thy reason to help the weakness of the will, by meditating on various points, the consideration of which may give the will strength and breath to resist the enemy. For example:

Thou art, perhaps, when under some persecution, or in other troubles, so sorely tempted to impatience, that thy will (it would seem) cannot, or, at least, will not endure it. Encourage it then by discoursing with the reason on such points as the following, or others like them.

Consider, first, whether thou hast given any occasion for the evil under which thou art suffering, and so hast deserved it; for if thou hast deserved it, every rule of justice requires thee to bear patiently the wound which, with thine own hand, thou hast inflicted on thyself.

Secondly. If free from blame in this instance, be-think thee of thy other sins, for which God has not

yet chastised thee, nor hast thou, as thou shouldest have done, duly punished thyself. Seeing, then, that God's mercy changes thy deserved punishment, which should be eternal, into some light affliction, which is but temporal, thou shouldest receive it, not willingly only, but with thankfulness.

Thirdly. Should thine offences against the Divine Majesty seem to thee light, and the penance thou hast endured for them heavy, (a persuasion, however, which thou shouldest never allow thyself to entertain,) thou must remember, that it is only through the strait gate of tribulation that thou canst enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Fourthly. That were it even possible to enter therein by any other way, the law of love forbids thee so much as to think of it, seeing that the Son of God, with all His friends and all His Members, has entered into that Kingdom by a path strewed with thorns and crosses.

Fifthly. What thou hast chiefly to consider, on this and all other occasions, is the Will of thy God, Who, for the love He bears thee, views with unspeakable complacency every act of virtue or mortification, which, as His faithful and courageous soldier, thou performest in return for His love to thee. And of this be sure, that the more unreasonable in itself the trial seems, and the greater indignity it has by reason of the quarter whence it comes, and therefore to thee the more vexatious and the harder to be borne, so much the more pleasing wilt thou be to the Lord, if, in things disordered in themselves, and so the more bitter to thee, thou canst approve and love His Divine Will and Providence, in Which, all events, how disordered soever, have a most perfect rule and order.

## CHAPTER XV.

**SOME ADVICE TOUCHING THE MANNER OF FIGHTING ; AND ESPECIALLY AGAINST WHOM, AND WITH WHAT RESOLUTION WE MUST CARRY ON THIS WARFARE.**

**THOU** hast already seen, my daughter, after what manner thou must fight in order to conquer self, and to adorn thyself with holiness.

Know further, that to obtain a speedier and easier victory over thine enemies, it is expedient, nay, necessary, that thou shouldst fight against them daily, and especially against self-love, accustoming thyself to value as dear friends every vexation and contempt which the world can heap upon thee.

And it is because men are not aware of the necessity of this daily warfare, and make too little account of it, that, as I have said before, their victories are unfrequent, difficult, imperfect, and unstable.

Further, I warn thee that thou must bring great steadfastness of soul to this conflict. And this gift thou wilt readily obtain, if thou implore it of God ; considering, on the one hand, the deathless hatred and fury of thine enemies, and the vast number of their ranks and squadrons ; and, on the other, how infinitely greater is the goodness of God, and the love wherewith He loves thee, and how much mightier too are the angels of heaven, and the prayers of the saints, who fight for us.

By this consideration have so many feeble women been enabled to overcome and conquer all the power

and wisdom of the world, all the assaults of the flesh, and all the fury of hell.

Therefore thou must never be dismayed, though at times thine enemy seem to be strengthening his array against thee, though the struggle threaten to last thy whole lifetime, and though almost certain falls menace thee on every side; for know furthermore, that the whole strength and wisdom of our enemies is in the Hands of our Divine Captain, in Whose honour the battle is arrayed; Who, valuing us beyond measure, and having Himself imperatively called us to the conflict, will never suffer thee to be overcome. Nay, more, He will Himself fight for thee, and will not fail, when He sees fitting, to subdue thy foes before thee; and this to thy greater reward, though He should delay to give thee the victory until the very last day of thy life.

This alone is thy concern, to fight manfully, and never, however manifold thy wounds, to lay down thine arms, or to take to flight.

Lastly. That thou fail not to fight valiantly, thou must know that this is a conflict whence there is no escape, and that he who will not fight must, of necessity, be either captured or slain.

Moreover, we have to do with enemies of such a nature, and so filled with deadly hate, as to leave to us no hope either of peace or truce.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHAT MANNER THE SOLDIER OF CHRIST SHOULD  
TAKE THE FIELD EARLY IN THE MORNING.

ON awaking in the morning, the first thing to be



observed by thine inward sight, is the listed field in which thou art enclosed, the law of the combat being, that he who fights not must there lie dead for ever.

Here picture to thyself, on one side, thine enemy (that evil inclination which thou art already pledged to conquer) now standing before thee, ready armed, to wound and slay thee. See also, on the right hand, thy victorious Captain, Jesus Christ, with His most holy mother, the Virgin Mary, and her beloved husband Joseph, and innumerable hosts of angels, especially St. Michael the Archangel; and, on the left hand, the infernal Demon, with all his armies, ready to excite this passion, and to persuade thee to yield to it.

Then shalt thou seem to hear a voice, as of thy Guardian Angel thus speaking to thee;

“Thou art to fight this day against this and other thine enemies. Let not thy heart fail, nor thy spirit faint; yield not on any account, either from fear, or from any other cause; for our Lord, thy Leader, stands beside thee, with all His glorious hosts, and will fight for thee against all thine enemies, and will not suffer their forces to prevail against thee, or to overpower thee.

“Only stand firm, do violence to thyself, and bear the pain which such violence will cause thee. Cry incessantly from the depths of thine heart, and call upon the Lord, so assuredly wilt thou gain the victory. If thou art weak and inexperienced, if thine enemies are strong and manifold—manifold more are the helps of Him Who has created and redeemed thee; and, beyond all measure and all comparison mightier is thy God, and more willing is He to save thee, than all thine enemies to destroy thee.

Fight valiantly then, and be not loth to suffer, for it is this toil in resisting thine evil inclination, this painful struggle against sinful habits, which shall gain thee the victory, and win for thee a treasure wherewith to purchase the Kingdom of heaven, and unite thy soul to God for ever."

Begin the combat in the Name of the Lord, with the arms of mistrust of self, and trust in God, with prayer and spiritual exercise, and challenge to the battle thy foe, i. e. that inclination, whatever it be, which, according to the order above laid down, thou hast resolved to conquer. Do this, one while by open resistance, or again by deep abhorrence, or yet again by acts of the contrary virtue, wounding him again and again, even unto death, to please thy Lord, Who, with the whole Church triumphant, is looking on, beholding thy conflict.

I tell thee again, thou must not weary of the struggle, but remember the obligation which lies on us all to serve and please God, and the absolute necessity of fighting, this being a battle from which none can escape without wounds or death. I tell thee, moreover, that if, as a rebel, thou wouldest fly from God, and give thyself over to the world and the delights of the flesh, thou wilt still be forced, in spite of thyself, to labour in the sweat of thy brow against many and many an adversary, who will pierce thy heart with deadly anguish.

Consider then what folly it would be to incur all this toil and trouble, which does but lead to greater toil, and endless trouble and spiritual death, in order to avoid that which will soon be over, and which will lead us to eternal and infinite blessedness in the everlasting enjoyment of our God!

## CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN THE CONFLICT  
WITH OUR EVIL PASSIONS.

It is of great importance that we should know how to observe a due order in this combat, lest, as is the manner of too many, to their great injury, we fight in a casual or desultory manner. The order of battle to be observed against thine enemies and evil inclinations should be as follows. Look well into thine heart, and search diligently till thou discover by what thoughts and affections it is encompassed, and by what passion it is most tyrannously swayed; and against this first, take up arms, and direct thine attack. If, meanwhile, thou art assaulted by other enemies, turn against the one nearest thee, and which threatens thee at the moment, but fail not to return afterwards to the prosecution of thy principal enterprize.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE WAY TO RESIST SUDDEN IMPULSES OF THE  
PASSIONS.

IF not yet well accustomed to ward off sudden attacks, whether of injuries or other adverse circumstances, it is well, in order to acquire such a habit, to anticipate them, and desire them over and over again, awaiting them with a ready mind.

The way to anticipate them is to consider the passions to which thou art most inclined, and also the

places where, and the persons with whom thou art wont to converse, whence thou mayest easily conjecture what is likely to befall thee.

And shouldest thou meet with any other untoward circumstance, which thou hadst not foreseen, although thou wilt find thy soul strengthened by having been prepared to meet the other evils which thou didst foresee, yet mayest thou also avail thyself of the following additional help.

At the very first stroke of the injury or trouble, whatever it be, rouse thyself at once, and lift up thy heart unto God, reflecting on His ineffable goodness and love to thee, which sends thee this adversity, that by enduring it for the love of Him, thou mayest be thereby the more purified, and brought nearer, and united unto Him.

And seeing how greatly it pleases Him that thou shouldest suffer it, turn next to thyself, and with a sharp rebuke, say, "Oh! why wilt thou refuse to bear this cross, which is sent to thee, not by man, but by thy Father Who is in Heaven?" Then turn to the Cross, and embrace it with all possible patience and joy, saying, "O Cross, formed by Divine Providence before I was born! O Cross, endeared to me by the dear love of my Crucified Lord, nail me now to thee, that so I may give myself to Him Who died upon thee to redeem me!"

And if at first, the passion prevail against thee, so that thou art wounded, and unable to raise thy heart to God, strive even then to do as at the beginning, and fight as if thou wert not wounded.

The most effectual remedy, however, against these sudden impulses is to remove betimes the cause whence they spring.

Thus, if thou discover that through thine affection

for any thing thou art wont, so often as it presents itself unto thee, to fall into a sudden agitation of mind ; the way to provide a timely remedy is to set thyself, time after time, to deprive it of this effect.

But if the agitation proceed not from a thing, but from a person, who is so disagreeable to thee, that every little action of his annoys or irritates thee, the remedy in this case is, to force thyself to love him, and to hold him dear, not only because he is a creature formed by the same sovereign Hand as thou art, and created anew by the same Divine Blood, but also because he offers thee an opportunity (if thou wilt accept it) of becoming like unto thy Lord, Who is kind and loving unto all men.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE WAY TO RESIST THE SINS OF THE FLESH.

**THIS** vice must be resisted in a way peculiar to itself, and different from all others.

In order, therefore, to a successful resistance, three periods must be observed.

1. Before we are tempted.
2. When we are tempted.
3. And after the temptation is over.

**I.** Before the temptation, the struggle will be against those things which are wont to occasion this temptation.

First. Thou must battle against the vice, but not attempt to face it; avoiding, to the utmost of thy power, every occasion and every person whence thou mayest incur the slightest peril.

And if compelled at times to converse with such, let it be done briefly, with a grave and modest demeanour, and using words of severity, rather than of excessive tenderness and affability.

Neither be confident in thyself, because thou art still, and hast been, after many years' practice, free from temptations of the flesh; for this accursed vice will do in an hour what in many years it has failed to effect, often making its preparations secretly; and it hurts the more grievously, and wounds the more incurably, the more friendly the form under which it appears, and the less occasion of suspicion it seems to give.

And oftentimes there is much to be feared (as experience has shown and still shows) when intercourse is carried on under fair and lawful pretexts, such as kindred, relative duty, or again, great virtue in the person beloved. For with this too frequent and imprudent intercourse, the poisonous pleasure of sense mingles itself, instilling its venom by degrees, till it penetrates into the marrow of the soul, and clouds the reason more and more, until no account is made of things which are really dangerous; such as loving glances, tender words, on either side, and the delights of conversation, and so, a change creeping over both, they fall at last into destruction, or into some temptation, most hard and toilsome to overcome.

Once more I say to thee, Fly! for thou art as stubble. Trust not to being bathed in and filled with the water of a good and strong purpose, and resolved and ready rather to die than to offend God; for by frequent stirring, the heat of the fire will gradually dry up the water of thy good purpose, and when thou

least thinkest, it will so inflame thee, that thou wilt respect neither kindred nor friends, wilt neither fear God, nor regard life nor honour, nor all the pains of hell. Therefore fly, fly, if indeed thou wouldest not be overtaken, captured, and slain.

Secondly. Avoid idleness, and be vigilant and awake, with the thoughts and deeds suitable to thy state of life.

Thirdly. Never resist the will of thy Superiours, but show them a ready obedience, executing promptly all their commands, and with most willingness such as humble thee, and are most opposed to thy natural will and inclination.

Fourthly. Beware of forming rash judgments of thy neighbour, especially with regard to this vice; and if he have manifestly fallen, have pity on him, be not bitter against him, nor hold him in contempt; but rather gather from his fall the fruit of humility and self-knowledge, confessing thyself to be but dust and ashes, drawing nigher unto God in prayer, and shunning more carefully than ever all intercourse wherein there may be even the shadow of danger.

For if thou art ready to judge and despise others, God will correct thee to thy cost, and suffer thee to fall into the same fault, in order to convince thee of thy pride; that by such humiliation both sins may be cured.

And even if thou shouldest not fall into this sin, yet, unless thou lay aside thy uncharitable judgment of others, thy state will be one of great doubtfulness.

Fifthly and lastly. Beware, lest finding thyself gifted with some enjoyment of spiritual delights, thou feel a certain vain complacency therein, and

persuade thyself that thou art something, and that thine enemies are now no longer able to attack thee, because thou seemest to thyself to regard them with disgust, horror, and hatred. For if thou art incautious in this matter, thou wilt easily fall.

II. In the hour of temptation, consider whether it proceeds from internal or external causes.

By external I mean, curiosity of the eyes or ears, over-particularity in dress, habits and conversations which incite to this sin.

The remedies in such cases are, purity, modesty, refusing to see or hear things which incite to this vice, and (as I said before) flight.

The internal are, either the rebellion<sup>1</sup> of the body, or thoughts of the mind, proceeding either from our evil habits, or else from suggestions of the devil.

The rebellion of the body must be mortified by fasts, disciplines, hair shirts, vigils, and other similar austerities, as discretion and obedience may teach.

Against evil thoughts, from whatever source arising, the remedies are as follows:—

1. Occupation in the various duties proper to our state of life.

2. Prayer and meditation.

Prayer should be made in the following manner.

When thou art first conscious of the presence of these evil thoughts, or even of such as may signify their approach, fly instantly in spirit to the Crucified Saviour, saying, "My JESUS! my sweet JESUS! help me speedily, that I fall not into the hands of this enemy!"

And sometimes embracing the cross on which thy Lord is extended, and kissing repeatedly the Wounds

<sup>1</sup> Vivacità.



in His sacred Feet, say lovingly, "O beauteous Wounds! chaste Wounds! holy Wounds! wound now this miserable, impure heart of mine, and free it from all that offendeth Thee."

At the moment when temptations to carnal delights assail thee, I would not have thee meditate upon certain points, which are recommended in many books as remedies against this temptation; such as the vileness of this vice, its insatiableness, the loathing, the bitterness which follow it, the peril and ruin of estate, life, honour, and such like.

For this is not always a sure way to overcome the temptation, but may prove rather hurtful than otherwise; for if, on the one hand, the mind drives away these thoughts, on the other, it gives us opportunity, and exposes us to the danger of taking delight in them, and of consenting thereto. Therefore the true remedy in all these cases is flight, not from these thoughts alone, but from every thing, however opposite, which may bring them before us.

Let then thy meditation for this end be on the Life and Passion of thy Crucified Lord.

And if, during thy meditation, the same thoughts again present themselves, against thy will, and molest thee more than usual, (which will very probably happen,) be not therefore discouraged, nor leave off thy meditation, but pursue it with all possible intensity, not turning from it even to repel such thoughts, but giving thyself no more concern about them than if they in no way belonged to thee. There is no better method than this of resisting them, how incessant soever be their attacks.

Thou wilt then conclude thy meditation with this, or some similar supplication, "Deliver me, O my

Creator and Redeemer, from mine enemies, to the honour of Thy Passion and of Thine unspeakable goodness." Suffer not thy thoughts to recur again to the sin; for the bare recollection of it is not without danger.

Neither stay, at any time, to reason with such temptations, whether thou hast consented unto them or not; for this is a device of the devil, who seeks, under the semblance of good, to disquiet thee, and make thee distrustful and faint-hearted; or hopes by entangling thee in such discourses to draw thee into some sin.

Therefore in this temptation (when the consent is not evident) it is sufficient that thou confess the whole briefly to thy spiritual father, and then rest satisfied with his opinion, without thinking of it more.

But be sure to reveal faithfully every thought to him, neither be restrained from doing so by shame, nor by any other consideration.

For if in dealing with all our enemies, we have need of the grace of humility to enable us to subdue them, in this case, more than in any other, are we bound to humble ourselves, this vice being almost always the punishment of pride.

III. When the time of temptation is past, what thou hast then to do is this. However free, however perfectly secure thou mayest feel from danger, keep far away from those objects which gave rise to the temptation, even shouldst thou be induced to do otherwise for some good and useful end. For this is a deception of our evil nature, and a snare of our cunning adversary, who transforms himself into an angel of light that he may bring us into darkness.

## CHAPTER XX.

## OF THE WAY TO COMBAT SLOTH.

To avoid falling into the miserable bondage of sloth, which would not only impede thy progress towards perfection, but also deliver thee into the hands of thine enemies,

Thou must avoid all curiosity concerning earthly things, and all attachment to them, and also every kind of occupation which belongs not to thy condition.

Next, thou must earnestly endeavour to respond readily to every holy inspiration from above, and to every command of thy Superiors ; doing every thing at the time, and in the manner which is pleasing to them.

Never delay, even for a moment ; for that one little delay will soon be followed by another, and then by a third, and then by others ; and to these latter, the senses will yield and give way more easily than to the former, being already fascinated and captivated by the pleasure they have therein enjoyed.

Hence the duty to be performed is either begun too late, or sometimes altogether neglected, as being too irksome.

Thus little by little a habit of sloth is acquired, which in time reduces us to such a state, that, ashamed of our present excessive sloth, which we cannot disguise from ourselves, we purpose, even while held in bondage by it, to be in future very diligent and active.

The poison of sloth overspreads the whole man, not only infecting the will, by making it hate exertion, but blinding also the understanding, so that it is unable to see how vain and unfounded are its intentions of doing promptly and diligently, at some future season, that which should be done at once, but which is either voluntarily neglected altogether, or deferred to another time.

Nor is it enough that we perform our appointed work quickly; we must, in order to bring it to its highest possible perfection, do it at the very time required by the nature and quality of the work, and with all befitting diligence.

For that is not diligence, but the subtlest form of sloth, which leads us to do our work before its time, not seeking to do it well, but despatching it hastily, that we may then give ourselves up to the sluggish repose, on which our thoughts have been dwelling whilst we have been hurrying over our business.

All this great evil proceeds from want of duly considering the value of a good work, when performed at its right time, and with a spirit determined to brave the toil and difficulties which the sin of sloth puts in the way of untried soldiers.

Thou shouldest therefore often remember, that a single lifting up of the heart to God, a single bending of the knee in His honour, is of more value than all the treasures of the world; and that each time we do violence to ourselves, and to our sinful passions, angels bring to our soul from the Kingdom of Heaven a crown of glorious victory.

Recollect also, on the other hand, that God gradually withdraws from the slothful the grace which

He had once bestowed upon them, while He increases that of the diligent, permitting them to enter at last into His joy.

If thou art not at first equal to a bold encounter with toil and hardship, conceal them from thyself, that they appear not to thee so formidable as sloth would represent them.

The exercise to which thou art called is, perhaps, to acquire some virtue, by many repeated acts, by many days of toil; and the enemies to be overcome seem to thee many and strong. Begin then these acts, as if thou hadst but a few of them to perform, but a few days' conflict to endure. Fight only against one adversary, as if there were no more to be resisted, and in full confidence that, with the help of God, thou wilt be stronger than they. In this manner, sloth will begin to grow weak, and will give way at last to the gradual entrance of the opposite virtue.

I would say the same of prayer. One hour of prayer is, perhaps, necessary for thee, and this seems a hard matter to sloth; but represent to her that thou wouldest pray but for the eighth part of an hour, thou wilt then easily pass on to another eighth, and so on to the whole.

But if in the second, or any other of these divisions, thou shouldest feel too violent a repugnance and difficulty, leave the exercise awhile, lest thou become weary; but return to it in a little time.

Thou shouldest pursue the same method with respect to manual labours, when thou art called upon to undertake things which, to sloth, seem many in number, and hard of execution, and so cause thee much disturbance. Begin, nevertheless, courageously

and quietly with one, as if thou hadst no more to do; and when thou hast diligently accomplished this, thou wilt be able to perform all the others with far less toil than to thy sloth would have seemed possible.

For if thou dost not pursue this method, and encounter resolutely the toil and hardship which lie in thy way, the vice of sloth will gain such a mastery over thee, that thou wilt be for ever harassed and annoyed, not only by the present toil and difficulty, which will always attend the first exercises of virtue, but even by the distant prospect of them. Thou wilt be for ever in fear of being tried and assailed by enemies, or laden with some fresh burden, so that, even in the time of peace, thou wilt live in a perpetual unrest.

Know also, my daughter, that this vice of sloth will not only, with its secret poison, gradually rot the first and feeble roots, which would in time have produced habits of virtue, but even the roots of habits already acquired. Like a worm in wood, it will go on insensibly corroding and eating away the marrow of the spiritual life. By this means does the devil seek to ensnare and delude all men, but especially spiritual persons.

Watch, therefore, pray and labour diligently, and defer not to weave the web of thy wedding garment, that thou be found ready adorned to meet the Bridegroom.

And remember day by day, that He Who gives thee the morning, does not promise thee the evening, and though He gives the evening, yet promises not the morrow.

Spend, therefore, every moment of every hour according to God's Will, as if it were thy last, and

so much the more, as for each moment thou wilt have to give the strictest account.

I conclude by warning thee to count that day lost (though thou mayest have despatched much business therein) in which thou hast neither gained some victory over thine evil inclinations and thy self-will, nor returned thanks to thy Lord for His mercies, and especially for His bitter Passion endured for thee, and for His sweet and fatherly correction, in having made thee worthy to receive at His Hand the priceless treasure of suffering.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE REGULATION OF THE OUTWARD SENSES, AND THE WAY TO PASS ON FROM THESE TO THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINITY.

**GREAT** watchfulness and continual exercise is needful for the due ordering and regulating of the outward senses; for the appetite, which is, as it were, the captain of our corrupt nature, inclines to an immoderate seeking after pleasure and enjoyment; and being unable, by itself alone, to attain unto them, it makes use of the senses as its soldiers, and as natural instruments for beholding objects, whose images it draws to itself, and impresses on the mind. Hence arises the sensation of pleasure, which, by means of the relation subsisting between it and the flesh, diffuses itself over all the senses which are capable of such pleasure, infecting both soul and body with a common contagion which corrupts the whole.

Thou seest the evil, mark the remedy.

Take good heed not to let thy senses stray freely where they will ; nor to use them where pleasure alone, and not utility, necessity, or any good end leads thee to do so. And if, inadvertently, they have wandered too far, recall them instantly, or so regulate them that, instead of remaining as before, in a miserable captivity to empty pleasures, they may gather a noble spoil from each passing object, and bring it home to the soul, that she, collected within herself, may, with a steadier flight, rise towards heaven in the contemplation of God. Which may be done as follows.

When any object presents itself to one of thine outward senses, separate mentally, from the created thing, the spirit which is in it, and reflect, that of itself, it possesses nothing of all that is apparent to thy senses, but that all is the work of God, Who endows it invisibly by His Spirit with the being, beauty, goodness, or what virtue soever belongs to it. Then rejoice that thy Lord alone is the Cause and Principle of so great and such varied perfections, and that in Himself they are all eminently contained ; all created excellencies being but the minutest degrees of His Divine and infinite Perfections. When occupied in the contemplation of objects of a noble nature, thou wilt mentally bring down the creature to its own nothingness ; fixing thy mind's eye on the Great Creator therein present, Who endued it with that nature, and delighting thyself in Him Alone, thou wilt say, " O Divine Essence, to be desired above all things, how do I rejoice that Thou Alone art the Infinite Principle of every created being ! "

In like manner, at the sight of trees, herbs, or such like objects, thou wilt understand, that the life



which they have, they have not of themselves, but of the Spirit Which thou seest not and Which Alone quickens them; thou mayest therefore say, "Behold here the true Life, from Which, in Which, and by Which all things live and grow! O living joy of this heart!"

So at the sight of brute animals, thou wilt raise thy thoughts to God, Who gave them feeling and motion, saying, "O thou first Mover of all that moveth, Thou art Thyself immoveable, how do I rejoice in Thy firmness and durability!"

And if allured by the beauty of the creature, separate that which thou seest from the spirit which thou seest not, and consider, that all which appears beautiful outwardly, is solely derived from the invisible Spirit which is the source of that external beauty, and say joyfully, "Behold, these are streamlets from the uncreated Fountain; behold, these are drops from the infinite Ocean of all good! Oh! how does my inmost heart rejoice at the thought of that eternal, infinite Beauty, Which is the Source and Origin of all created beauty!"

And on discovering in others, goodness, wisdom, justice, or similar virtues, make the same mental separation, and say to thy God, "O most rich Treasure-house of all virtues, how greatly do I rejoice, that from Thee, and through Thee Alone flows all goodness; and that all in comparison with Thy Divine Perfection is as nothing! I thank Thee, Lord, for this, and for every other good gift which Thou hast vouchsafed to my neighbour; remember, Lord, my poverty and my great need of this very virtue!"

In stretching out thy hand to do any thing, reflect that God is the first Cause of that action, and thou but His living instrument; and raising thy thoughts

to Him, say thus, "How great is my inward joy, Supreme Lord of all, that without Thee I can do nothing, and that Thou art indeed the first and chiefest Worker of all things."

When eating or drinking, consider that it is God Who makes thy food pleasant to thee. Delighting thyself therefore in Him Alone, thou mayest say, "Rejoice, O my soul, that as there is no true contentment but in thy God, so in Him Alone mayest thou in all things delight thyself!"

If thy senses are gratified by some sweet odour, rest not in this enjoyment, but pass on in thought to the Lord, from Whom this sweetness is derived, and inwardly comforted by this thought, thou wilt say, "Grant, O Lord, that like as I rejoice because all sweetness flows from Thee, so may my soul, pure and free from all earthly pleasure, ascend on high as a sweet savour acceptable unto Thee!"

When thou hearest any harmony of sweet sounds, let thy heart turn to God, and say, "How do I joy, O my Lord and my God, in Thine Infinite Perfections, which not only produce a super-celestial harmony in Thine own Self, but also unite in one harmonious, marvellous concert, the angels, the heavens, and all created beings!"

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## CHAPTER XXII.

HOW THE SAME THINGS ARE TO US THE MEANS OF REGULATING OUR SENSES, AND OF LEADING US ON TO MEDITATE ON THE INCARNATE WORD, IN THE MYSTERIES OF HIS LIFE AND PASSION.

I HAVE shown thee above, how we may raise our minds from sensible objects to the contemplation of

the Divinity. Now learn a way of taking occasion from the same to meditate on the Incarnate Word, and reflect on the most sacred Mysteries of His Life and Passion.

All things in the universe may serve to this end, if, as I said before, thou wilt view God in them as the sole first Cause, Who has given them all the being, and beauty, and excellence which they possess. Thence passing on, consider how great, how immeasurable is His goodness, Who being the sole Principle and Lord of all creation, was pleased to descend so low as to become Man, to suffer, and die for man, permitting the very works of His Hands to arm themselves against Him, and crucify Him.

Many things, then, will bring these holy Mysteries before the eyes of the mind; such as arms, cords, scourges, pillars, thorns, reeds, nails, hammers, and other instruments of His passion.

Poor hovels will recall to our memory the stable and the manger of our Lord. Rain will remind us of the drops of Divine Blood which fell from His most Sacred Body in the garden, and watered the earth. The rocks which we see will represent to us those which were rent asunder at His Death. The earth will bring to remembrance the earthquake at that hour; the sun, the darkness which then covered it. The sight of water will speak to us of that stream which issued from His most Sacred Side,

The same may be said of other like things.

Let the taste of wine, or other liquid, remind thee of thy Lord's vinegar and gall.

If sweet perfumes refresh thee, think of the ill savour of the dead bodies which He smelt on Calvary.

When clothing thyself, recollect that the Eternal Word clothed Himself with human flesh, that He might clothe thee with His Divinity.

When unclothing thyself, remember Christ, Who was stripped of His garments, to be scourged and crucified for thee.

If thou hear the shouts and cries of the multitude, think of those hateful voices, "Away with Him, away with Him, Crucify Him, crucify Him," which resounded in His Divine ears.

As often as the clock strikes, think of that deep sorrow and heaviness of heart which Jesus was pleased to endure in the garden, as the fear of His approaching Death and Passion began to fall upon Him; or picture to thyself those heavy blows which nailed Him to the Cross.

On any occasion of grief or sorrow which presents itself, whether thine own or another's, reflect that all these things are as nothing, compared to the inconceivable anguish which pierced and wrung the Soul and Body of thy Lord.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

OF OTHER MEANS WHEREBY TO REGULATE OUR SENSES ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT OCCASIONS WHICH PRESENT THEMSELVES.

HAVING now seen how to raise the mind from sensible things to the contemplation of the Divinity, and of the Mysteries of the Incarnate Word, I will here add some helps for various subjects of meditation,

that as the tastes of souls are many and various, so also may be the nourishment thereof. This may be useful not only to simple-minded persons, but also to those of loftier minds and more advanced in the spiritual life, who nevertheless may not at all times be equally disposed and ready for higher contemplations.

Nor hast thou any reason to fear perplexity from the variety of the methods described, if thou wilt only observe the rule of discretion, and attend to the advice of others, which not in this instance only, but on all occasions, I desire thee to follow with all humility and confidence.

On beholding so many things which are pleasing to the sight and prized on earth, consider that all these are vile as dust compared to heavenly riches; after which do thou (despising the whole world) aspire with undivided affections.

When looking towards the sun, reflect that thy soul is brighter and more beautiful than it, if it be in favour with thy Creator; that otherwise, it is blacker and more hateful than the darkness of hell.

When raising thy bodily eyes to the heavens above thee, let those of thy mind penetrate even to the Heaven of heavens, and there fix thyself in thought, as in the place prepared for thy eternal and blessed abode, if thou shalt live holily upon earth.

On hearing the songs of birds, or other melodious sounds, lift thy heart to the songs of Paradise, where resounds a never-ending Hallelujah; and pray the Lord to make thee worthy to praise Him together with those celestial spirits, for ever and ever.

If thou art conscious of taking delight in the beauties of the creature, remember that there lies hid

the deadly serpent ready and eager to slay or at least to wound thee, and say to him: "O, accursed serpent, how insidiously dost thou lay wait to devour me!" Then turning to God, say, "Blessed be Thou, O my God, Who hast discovered to me the hidden enemy, and delivered me from his devouring jaws!"

Then, fly at once from the allurements to the Wounds of the Crucified Saviour, letting thy mind rest in Them, considering how acutely thy Lord suffered in His most Sacred Flesh, to free thee from sin, and to make all carnal delights hateful to thee.

I would remind thee of another way of escape from this perilous allurements, namely, to consider well what will be, after death, the condition of that object which now so delights thee.

When walking, remember that every step brings thee nearer unto death.

Let the flight of birds, and the flowing of water, remind thee that thy life is hastening to its close with much greater swiftness.

Let stormy winds, lightning and thunder, remind thee of the tremendous Day of Judgment; and kneeling down, worship God, and pray Him to give thee time and grace to prepare thyself duly to appear then before His most exalted Majesty.

In the variety of accidents which may befall thee, exercise thyself thus. When (for example) thou art oppressed by sadness or melancholy, or sufferest heat, cold, or the like, lift up thy heart to that Eternal Will, Which, for thine own good, willeth that at such a time, and in such a measure, thou shouldst feel this discomfort. Then, rejoicing at the love which thy God shews thee, and at the opportunity of serving Him in the way He is pleased to appoint, say in

thine heart: "Behold in me the fulfilment of the Divine Will, Which has lovingly ordered from all eternity that I should now endure this trial. All praise be to Thee, my most gracious Lord, for the same."

When any good thought arises in thy mind, turn instantly to God, and referring it to Him, give Him thanks for it.

When reading, behold thy Lord in the words, and receive them as coming from His Divine Lips.

When looking upon the Holy Cross, consider that It is the Standard of thy warfare, that by forsaking It, thou wilt fall into the hands of cruel enemies, but by following It, thou wilt attain unto heaven, laden with glorious spoils.

When thou seest Churches, thou mayest, amid other devout reflections, consider that thy soul is the temple of God, and therefore, as His dwelling-place, thou oughtest to keep it pure and spotless.

When thou beholdest a picture of the Virgin Mary, thank God<sup>1</sup> that she was ever ready to do the will of thy God, that she brought forth and nourished the Redeemer of the world [and adore in amazement the ineffable Mystery of God made Man].

Let pictures of the Saints represent to thee so

<sup>1</sup> "Thank her" [Orig.] The last sentence is also a substitution. This passage has been the rather retained, because these are objects very frequent among us; and the careless beholding (e. g. as works of art) of pictures of the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Infant, which are the very embodying of the awful Mystery of the Incarnation, must do such exceeding harm; and, even short of this, to behold them without some religious acts, as of thanksgiving, love, amazement at His condescension, Who, being God, took our nature upon Him, would be deadening.—[ED.]

many champions who, having courageously run their course, have opened a way for thee, in which, if thou wilt press onward, thou also shalt with them be crowned with immortal glory.

[When<sup>1</sup> the clock strikes, be it to you as the Voice of God, telling you that the world is passing away, and that the Word of God alone abideth for ever, and in Him he who doeth His will ; that another hour is taken from the sum of thy life, and pray thy Saviour for mercy at the hour of death ; or thank Him for His grace hitherto, and pray for perseverance through the day ; or gird thyself anew to act as thou wouldest, were this thy last hour ; or think of some mystery of the hour<sup>2</sup> ; or repeat some brief aspiration which thou hast chosen for the day.

Especially, "the third, sixth, and the ninth hours," (9, 12, 3,) have been, from the first, "allotted to prayer, that while we are perhaps intent upon other business, and might forget our duties toward God, the very *hour*, when it comes, may put us in mind thereof." "The worshippers of God, spiritually appointing of old these spaces of time, observed them as their fixed and lawful seasons for prayer ; a mystery of the Trinity which in the latter days should be revealed. For from the first hour to the third is a trinity of number ; from the fourth to the sixth is another trinity ; and in the seventh closing with the ninth a perfect trinity is numbered in spaces of three hours : " so that our very life, by these divisions, is a continual memory and worship of the Ever-blessed Trinity. "And how can we do less than three times in the day at least, (besides morning and evening, which will invite us to prayer of themselves,) fall down and worship the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ?"

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<sup>1</sup> A passage has been omitted, containing directions for meditation "on hearing each of the three signals for the Angelical Salutation," since we have not the custom. Some suggestions, chiefly from S. Cyprian, S. Isidore (in Bp. Cosins), and hymns in the Breviary, have been substituted in connection with the three great canonical hours.—[ED.]

<sup>2</sup> See e. g. "The Horology," by I. K.—[ED.]



Thus, when the clock strikes nine, think that at that hour the Holy Spirit descended on the Disciples, fulfilling the gracious promise of the Lord, and pray,

“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls possess  
With Thy full flood of holiness.”

When it strikes twelve, “worship Him Who then hung upon the Cross for thee, and cleansed thy sins with His Blood;” pray Him Who, for thy salvation, stretched forth His Arms upon the Cross, to receive thee within the Arms of His mercy.

When it strikes three, “remember how He” then, “for thy redemption and quickening, made victory perfect by His Passion,” and commended His Spirit into the Hands of His Father,” and pray Him for grace to “follow His Death,” and to “receive thee to life.”

At sunrise, “since Christ is the True Sun and the True Day,” pray Him,

“Light from Light, unfailing Ray,  
Day creative of the day,  
Truest Sun upon us flow,  
With Thy calm perpetual glow.”

At sunset, pray “for that coming of Christ which will give to us the grace of the light eternal:”

“The red sun is gone :  
Thou Light of the heart,  
Blessed Three, Holy One,  
To Thy servants a sun  
Everlasting impart.”]

And to express briefly the method by which thou must regulate thy senses, be watchful, so that in all things and under all circumstances, thou be moved and drawn, not by hatred or love of them, but by the Will of God Alone, loving and hating only what God wills thee to love and hate.

And observe that I have not given the above methods for regulating the senses, that thou mightest

dwell upon them ; for thy mind should almost always be fixed upon thy Lord, Who wills that by frequent acts thou shouldest apply thyself to conquer thine enemies and thy sinful passions, both by resisting them, and by making acts of the contrary virtues ; but I have taught them thee, that thou mayest know how to rule thyself on needful occasions.

For thou must know that there is little fruit in a multiplicity of spiritual exercises, which, however excellent in themselves, often lead to mental perplexity, to self-love, instability, and the snares of the devil.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### OF THE WAY TO RULE THE TONGUE.

It is very necessary that the tongue be well regulated and bridled, because every one is much disposed to let it run on upon those things which are most pleasing to the senses.

Much speaking springs ordinarily from pride. We persuade ourselves that we know a great deal, we take delight in our own conceits, and endeavour by needless repetitions to impress them on the minds of others, that we may exercise lordship over them, as though they needed instruction from us.

It is not possible to express in few words the many evils which arise from over-much speaking.

Talkativeness is the mother of sloth, the sign of ignorance and folly, the door of slander, the minister of lies, the destroyer of fervent devotion.

A multitude of words adds strength to evil passions, by which the tongue is the more easily led on to indiscreet talking.

Do not indulge in long conversations with those who are unwilling to hear thee, lest thou weary them, nor with those who love to listen to thee, lest thou exceed the bounds of modesty.

Avoid loud and positive speech, which is not only odious in itself, but is also a sign of presumption and vanity.

Never speak of thyself or thy doings, nor of thy kindred, but in cases of absolute necessity, and then with all possible reserve and brevity. If others seem to speak overmuch of themselves, try to put a favourable construction upon their conduct, but do not imitate it, even though their words may tend to self-humiliation and self-accusation.

Speak as little as may be of thy neighbour or of any thing that concerns him, unless an opportunity offers to say something good of him.

Speak willingly of God, and especially of His love and goodness, but with fear and caution, lest even here thou fall into error: rather take pleasure in listening while others speak of Him, laying up their words in the depth of thine heart.

Let the sound of men's voices strike only upon thine ear; do thou meanwhile lift up thy heart to the Lord: and if thou must needs listen to their discourse, in order to understand and reply to it, yet neglect not to cast thine eye in thought to heaven, where thy God dwelleth, and contemplate His loftiness, as He ever beholds thy vileness.

Let the things which thy heart suggests thee to say be well considered, before they pass on to the

tongue ; for thou wilt perceive that it would be well to suppress many of them. And I still further assure thee, that not a few even of those which thou wilt then think it well to speak, would be far better buried in silence ; and so thou wilt perceive upon reflection, when the opportunity for speaking is past.

Silence, my daughter, is a strong fortress in the spiritual combat, and a sure hope of victory.

Silence is the friend of him who distrusts himself, and trusts in God ; it is the guard of holy prayer, and a wonderful help in the practice of holiness.

In order to accustom thyself to silence, consider frequently the evils and perils of talkativeness, and the great benefit of silence. Love this virtue ; and in order to acquire the practice of it, occasionally keep silence even at times when thou mightest lawfully speak ; provided this be not to the prejudice of thyself or others.

And to the attainment of this, a withdrawal from society will greatly help thee ; for in the place of men, thou wilt have the society of angels, of saints, and of God Himself.

Lastly, remember the combat which thou hast in hand, that seeing how much thou hast to do, thou mayest the more willingly refrain from all superfluous words.

## CHAPTER XXV.

THAT IN ORDER TO FIGHT SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST HIS ENEMIES, THE SOLDIER OF CHRIST MUST AVOID, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, ALL PERTURBATIONS AND DISQUIET OF MIND.

As, when we have lost our peace of mind, we should do our utmost to recover it, so thou must learn that there is no accident of life which should reasonably have power to take from us that peace, or even to trouble it.

Over our own sins we have indeed cause to mourn, but our sorrow (as I have shewn above more than once) should be calm; and in like manner, without disquiet, but with a holy feeling of charity, should we compassionate all other sinners, and weep at least inwardly over their offences.

As to other sad and trying events, such as sickness, wounds, or loss of nearest friends; pestilence, fire, war, or such like evils; though these, being painful to nature, are for the most part shunned by the men of this world, yet may we, by Divine grace, not only desire them, but even love them, as just chastisements upon the wicked, and to the righteous occasions of virtue. For on these accounts does our Lord God take pleasure in them; Whose Will bearing us on, we shall pass with a calm and quiet spirit through all the bitterness and contradictions of this life. And be sure that all disquiet on our part is displeasing in His sight; for of whatever nature it be, it is never free from imperfection, and always springs from some evil root of self-love.

Keep therefore a sentinel, ever on the watch, who as soon as he shall discover any thing whatever which may disquiet or disturb thee, may give a signal for thee to take up thy weapons of defence.

And consider that all these evils, and many others of a like kind, though outwardly they appear to be such, are not indeed real evils, nor can they rob us of any real good, but are all ordered or permitted by God, for the aforesaid righteous ends, or for others most just and most holy, though we think it not.

So may the most untoward accident work for us much good, if we do but keep our souls in peace and tranquillity ; otherwise all our exercises will produce little or no fruit.

Besides, when the heart is unquiet, it is always exposed to manifold assaults of the enemy ; and moreover, in such a state we are incapable of clearly discerning the right path, and the sure way of holiness.

Our enemy, who above all things hates this peace, because it is the place where dwelleth the Spirit of God, in order to work therein great wonders, often seeks to deprive us of it, under a friendly garb, by instilling into our hearts sundry desires which have a semblance of good ; but their deceitful nature may be detected by this test among others, that they rob us of our peace of mind.

Therefore, to avert so great an evil, when the sentinel gives warning of the approach of some new desire, let it on no account enter into thy heart, until, with a free and unbiassed will, thou hast first presented it to God, and confessing thy blindness and ignorance, hast prayed to Him earnestly for light to see whether it comes from Him or from the enemy.

Thou shouldst also have recourse, if possible, to the judgment of thy spiritual father.

And though the desire should come from God, do not begin to execute it, till thou hast mortified thine own eagerness; for a work, preceded by such mortification, will be far more acceptable to Him, than if performed with all the impetuosity of nature; nay, sometimes it may be that the mortification will please Him better than the work itself.

Thus, casting from thee all evil desires, and not even venturing to carry the good ones into effect till thou hast first repressed thy natural impulses, thou shalt keep the fortress of thy heart in security and peace.

And in order to preserve it in perfect peace, thou must also guard and defend it from certain inward self-reproaches, and remorseful feelings, which are sometimes from the devil, though (since they accuse thee of some failing) they seem to proceed from God. By their fruits thou shalt know whence they spring.

If they humble thee, if they make thee diligent in well doing, if they take not from thee thy trust in God, thou shouldst receive them as coming from Him with all thankfulness. But if they discourage thee, if they make thee fearful, distrustful, slack, and feeble in good deeds, then be sure that they come from the enemy, give no ear to them, but continue thine exercise.

And moreover, since anxiety at the approach of adverse events springs up still more frequently in our hearts, thou hast two things to do in order to defend thyself against this assault.

The first is, carefully to examine and discover

whereto these events are adverse, whether to the soul, or to self-love and self-will.

For if they be adverse to thine own will, and to thy love of self, (thy chief and greatest enemy,) then thou shouldst not call them adverse, but deem them special favours and helps from the Most High God, to be received with a joyful heart, and with thanksgiving.

And be they even adverse to the soul, thou must not, on this account, lose thy peace of mind, as I will teach thee in the following chapter.

The second is, to lift up the heart to God, accepting all things blindly from the loving Hand of His Divine Providence, ever full of manifold blessings, which thou mayest not as yet comprehend, and seeking to know nothing further.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WHAT WE SHOULD DO WHEN WE ARE WOUNDED.

WHEN thou feelest thyself wounded, from having weakly, or it may be even wilfully, and deliberately, fallen into some sin, be not over fearful or over anxious, but turn instantly to God, and say unto Him:—

“Behold, O Lord, what of myself I have done; and what indeed but falls could be expected from me?”

And then, after a short pause, humble thyself in thine own eyes, mourn over the offence committed against thy Lord, and (without confusion) be full of indignation against thine evil passions, especially against that one which occasioned thy fall.



Then say :—

“Nor even here, Lord, should I have stopped, if Thy goodness had not withheld me!”

And here give thanks unto Him, and love Him more than ever, wondering at the greatness of His mercy, Who, when thou hadst so offended Him, stretched out His right Hand, to save thee from another fall.

Lastly, say with great confidence in His infinite compassion :—

“Forgive me, Lord, for Thine own sake, suffer me not to depart from Thee, nor to be separated from Thee, nor ever more to offend Thee.”

And this done, do not sit down to think whether God has pardoned thee or no, for this is nothing else but pride, restlessness of mind, loss of time, and a delusion of the devil, under colour of various fair pretexts. But committing thyself unreservedly to the merciful Hands of God, pursue thine exercise as if thou hadst not fallen.

And if thou shouldst fall, and shouldst be wounded many times in the day, repeat what I have taught thee, with no less faith, the second, the third, and even the last time, than the first; and despising thyself and hating the sin more and more, strive to lead henceforth a life of greater watchfulness.

This exercise is very displeasing to the devil, both because he sees it to be most acceptable to God, and because he is confounded at seeing himself conquered by the arms of one, over whom he had been at first victorious. And, therefore, by many artful ways does he seek to make us relinquish it, and often through our carelessness and lack of vigilance over self is he but too successful.

Therefore, if this exercise seem very hard to thee, so much the greater violence must thou do to thyself, renewing it repeatedly, even after a single fall.

And if after a fault thou feel uneasy, confused, and distrustful, the first thing to be done is, to recover thy peace and quietness of mind, and with it thy confidence also. Armed with these, turn again to the Lord ; for the uneasiness thou feelest on account of thy sin, arises not from the consideration of the offence against God, but of the injury to thyself.

The way to recover this peace, is for a time entirely to discard the thought of thy fall, and to set thyself to meditate on the unspeakable goodness of God ; how He is beyond measure ready and willing to forgive every sin, how grievous soever it be ; calling the sinner by various ways and means, to come to Him, that He may unite him to Himself in this life by His grace to hallow him, and in the life to come by His glory to make him blessed eternally.

And after having quieted thy soul by these or the like reflections, turn thy thoughts once more to thy fall, doing as I have told thee above.

Again, at the time of sacramental confession, which I exhort thee to frequent constantly, call to mind all thy falls, and with renewed sorrow and indignation at the offence against God, and renewed purpose never more to offend Him, disclose them with all sincerity to thy spiritual father.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

OF THE MEANS EMPLOYED BY THE DEVIL TO ASSAIL AND DECEIVE THOSE WHO DESIRE TO GIVE THEMSELVES UP TO HOLINESS, AND THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY TAKEN CAPTIVE IN THE BONDAGE OF SIN.

THOU must know, my daughter, that the devil is intent upon nothing but our ruin, and that he does not employ the same mode of attack with all persons.

In order, then, to make known to thee some of his modes of attack, his plans and stratagems, I will lay before thee different conditions of men.

Some remain in the service of sin without a thought of freeing themselves therefrom.

Some would fain be free, but never make the attempt.

Others think they are walking in the way of godliness, while they are moving away from it.

And, lastly, some, after having attained unto holiness, fall into deeper perdition.

We will discourse separately of each.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF THE DEVIL'S ASSAULTS AND STRATAGEMS AGAINST THOSE WHOM HE HOLDS IN THE BONDAGE OF SIN.

WHEN the devil holds a man in the bondage of sin, his chief care is to blind him more and more, and to

keep from him every thought which might lead him to a knowledge of his most miserable condition.

And not only does he, by instilling contrary thoughts, drive from him all reflections and inspirations, which call him to conversion, but, by affording him ready opportunities, he makes him fall into the same, or, it may be, into other and greater sins.

Hence the thicker and darker waxes his blindness, the more desperate and habitual becomes his course of sin ; and thus from blindness to deeper blindness, from sin to fouler sin, his wretched life whirls round even unto death, unless God, by His grace, provide a remedy. The remedy for one in this most unhappy state is, to be ready, on his part, to give heed to the thoughts and inspirations which call him from darkness to light, crying out, with all his heart, to his Creator, "O Lord, help me, make speed to help me, leave me not any longer in this darkness of sin." And let him not fail to repeat over and over again this cry for mercy in these or the like words.

If possible, let him fly instantly to some spiritual guide, and ask aid and counsel, so that he may be delivered from the power of the enemy.

And if he cannot do this immediately, let him fly with all speed to the Crucified, and, throwing himself at His sacred Feet, with his face to the earth, crave mercy and help.

On such like speed depends the victory, as thou wilt learn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

OF THE ARTS AND STRATAGEMS BY WHICH HE HOLDS IN BONDAGE THOSE WHO, KNOWING THEIR MISERY, WOULD FAIN BE FREE; AND HOW IT IS THAT OUR RESOLVES PROVE SO OFTEN INEFFECTUAL.

THOSE who, knowing the evil of their course of life, desire to change it, the devil often deceives and overcomes by such weapons as the following:—

“Presently, presently.”

“Cras, cras,” (“to-morrow, to-morrow,”) as says the raven<sup>1</sup>.

“I wish first to consider and despatch this business, this perplexity, that I may be then able to give myself up with greater tranquillity to things spiritual.”

A snare this, in which many men have been, and still are daily taken; and the cause of this is our own negligence and heedlessness, seeing that in a business touching the honour of God and the salvation of the soul, we neglect to seize at once that effectual weapon.

“Now, now,” wherefore “presently?”

“To-day, to-day,” wherefore “to-morrow?” saying to thyself:

“Supposing even this ‘presently’ and this ‘to-morrow’ be granted me, is it the path of safety and of victory to seek first to be wounded, and to commit fresh disorders?”

Thou seest then, my daughter, that in order to escape this snare, and the one mentioned in the pre-

<sup>1</sup> “This is the thing that destroys many; while they are saying ‘Cras, cras,’ suddenly the door is shut. He tarried without with the raven’s cry; because he had not the moaning of the dove. ‘Cras, cras,’ is the cry of the raven. Moan as the dove, and smite the breast, &c.”—St. Aug. Serm.

ceding chapter, and to subdue the enemy, the way is, prompt obedience to heavenly thoughts and inspirations.

Prompt obedience, I say, and not mere resolves; for these are often fallacious, and many have been thereby deceived from different causes.

The first, as touched upon above, is, that our resolves are not founded in mistrust of self, and trust in God. But this, our excessive pride, whence proceeds this blindness and delusion, will not suffer us to perceive.

The light whereby to see it, and the help to cure it, both proceed from the goodness of God, Who suffers us to fall, that by the fall He may call us from self-confidence to confidence in Him Alone, and from pride to the knowledge of self.

Therefore thy resolves, to be effectual, must be stedfast; and to be stedfast, they must have nothing of trust in self, but be humbly based on trust in God.

The other reason is, that when we are making our resolves, we dwell on the beauty and excellence of virtue, whereby our will, however slack and feeble, is drawn; but when confronted with the difficulties which attend the attainment of virtue, the will being untried and feeble, fails, and draws back again.

Therefore, inure thyself to love the difficulties which the attainment of virtue brings with it, more than even the virtues themselves, and use these difficulties now in a greater, now in a lesser degree, to strengthen thy will, if thou wouldest in good earnest attain unto holiness.

And know, that the more promptly and firmly thou shalt conquer thyself and thine adversaries, the more courageously wilt thou embrace the difficulties, and the dearer will they be to thee.

The third reason is, that our resolves too often have in view our own advantage, rather than holiness and the Will of God. This is frequently the case with resolves made in times of great spiritual joy or heavy sorrow, when we seem unable to find any relief, but in a resolve to give ourselves wholly to God, and to exercises of devotion.

That thou fall not into this snare, take care, in times of spiritual delight, to be very cautious and humble in thy resolves, especially in thy vows and promises; and when in tribulation, let thy resolve be, in accordance with God's will, to bear thy cross patiently, even to make it heavier, by refusing all earthly, and, if so be, all heavenly alleviation. Let thy one desire, thy one prayer be, that God would help thee to bear all adverse things without any spot to the grace of patience, or aught unloving toward thy Lord.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

OF THE DELUSION OF THOSE WHO THINK THEY ARE  
GOING ONWARD TO PERFECTION.

REPULSED thus in his first and second attack and device, our malignant foe has recourse to the third, which is, to turn away our attention from the enemies who are at hand to assail and injure us, and to fill us with desires and resolves after higher degrees of perfection.

Hence it follows, that we are continually wounded, yet pay no regard to our wounds, looking upon these resolves as already carried into effect, and priding ourselves upon them in various ways.

And while we cannot endure the least thing, or the slightest word which crosses our will, we waste our time in long meditations, and resolves to endure the acutest sufferings for the love of God.

And because our senses feel no repugnance to these sufferings, as things far off, therefore do we, miserable creatures, flatter ourselves into the conceit, that we are of those who are patiently enduring great things.

In order to avoid this snare, be resolved, and fight against the enemies which are close at hand, and are really waging war against thee. Thou wilt thereby see whether thy resolves are real or imaginary, weak or strong, and so thou wilt go on unto holiness and perfection by the royal and beaten road.

But as to enemies who are not wont to annoy thee, I do not advise thee to take up arms against such, unless there appear a probability of their meditating a speedy attack. In this case it is lawful to make resolves beforehand, that thou mayest be found firm and ready.

Do not, however, judge of thy resolves by effects, even though thou have for a long time, and in a right manner, exercised thyself in holiness; but be very humble with regard to them, fear thyself and thine own weakness, and trust in God, and by frequent prayer seek His help to strengthen thee and preserve thee from dangers, and especially from the very slightest presumption and confidence in self.

For, in this case, if we cannot perfectly overcome some little faults, which the Lord sometimes leaves in us, in order to a more humble knowledge of self, and for the protection of some virtue, it is, nevertheless, lawful for us to form purposes of a higher degree of perfection.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE DEVIL'S ASSAULTS AND DEVICES TO DRAW US AWAY FROM THE PATH OF HOLINESS.

**THE** fourth device, by which, as I said before, the evil one assails us, is the following. When he sees us advancing steadily towards holiness, he excites in us a variety of good desires, that by their means he may lead us from the exercise of virtue into sin.

A sick person, perhaps, is bearing his illness with a patient will. The cunning adversary knows, that by this means he may attain to a habit of patience, and immediately lays before him all the good works, which, in a different condition, he might be able to perform; and so tries to persuade him, that if he were but well, he would be able to serve God better, and be more useful to himself and others.

Having once aroused within him such wishes, he goes on increasing them by degrees, till he makes him restless at the impossibility of carrying them into effect as he wished.

And the deeper and stronger such wishes become, the more does this restlessness increase. Then the enemy leads him on gently, and with a stealthy step, to impatience under the sickness, not as sickness, but as a hindrance to those good works which the sick man so anxiously desired to perform for some greater good.

When he has brought him thus far, with the same wiliness he removes from his mind the end to be had in view in serving God and performing good works, and leaves him only the bare desire to be freed from his sickness.

Then, if this does not happen according to his wish,

he is so disturbed as to become actually impatient. And so, unknowingly, he falls from the virtue in which he was exercising himself, into the opposite vice.

The way to guard against and resist this snare, is to be very careful, when in any trying state, not to give way to desires after any good work, which, being out of thy power to execute, would, very probably, disquiet thee.

In such cases, thou shouldest, with all humility, patience, and resignation, give thyself up to believe, that thy wishes would not have the effect thou thinkest, inasmuch as thou art far more insignificant and unstable than thou thinkest thyself.

Or else believe that God, in His secret judgment, or on account of thy unworthiness, is not pleased to accept this work at thy hand, but wills rather, that thou shouldest abase and humble thyself patiently under the gentle and mighty Hand of His Will.

In like manner, if hindered by thy spiritual father, or in any other way, so that thou canst not, as frequently as thou wouldest, go to thy devotions, and more particularly to the Holy Communion, suffer not thyself to be troubled and disquieted by longings after them, but, stripped of every thing which is thine, clothe thyself with the good pleasure of thy Lord, saying within thyself:

“If the eye of Divine Providence did not perceive ingratitude and sin in me, I should not now be deprived of the blessing of receiving the most Holy Sacrament, but seeing that my Lord thus discovers to me my unworthiness, for ever blessed and praised be His Name for this. I trust, O my Lord, that in Thine infinite loving-kindness Thou wilt so order my heart that, bearing Thee and pleasing Thee in all

things, and disposed to every Will of Thine, it may open itself unto Thee, so that Thou, entering into it spiritually, mayest comfort and strengthen it against the enemies who seek to draw it away from Thee. Thus, may all be done as seems good in Thy sight. My Creator and Redeemer, may Thy will be now and ever my food and support. This only favour do I beg of Thee, O my Beloved, that my soul, freed and purified from every thing displeasing to Thee, and adorned with all holiness, may be ever prepared for Thy coming, and for whatsoever it may please Thee to do with me."

If thou wilt observe these instructions, know for certain, that when baffled in any good work which thou hast a desire to perform, be the hindrance from the devil, to disquiet thee and turn thee aside from the way of godliness, or be it from God, to make proof of thy submission to His will, thou wilt still have an opportunity of pleasing thy Lord in the way most acceptable to Him. And herein consists true devotion, and the service which God requires of us.

I warn thee further, lest thou grow impatient under trials, from whatsoever source proceeding, that in using the lawful means which God's servants are wont to use, thou use them not with the desire and hope to obtain relief, but because it is the will of God that they be used; for we know not whether His Divine Majesty will be pleased by their means to deliver us.

If thou dost otherwise, thou wilt fall into further evils; for, the thing not succeeding according to thy purpose or desires, thou wilt readily run into impatience, or thy patience will be defective, not wholly pleasing to God, and of little worth.

Lastly, I would here warn thee of a hidden deceit

of our self-love, which is wont, on certain occasions, to cover and justify our faults.

For example, a sick man who has but little patience under his sickness, conceals his impatience under the veil of zeal for some apparent good, saying that his vexation comes not really from impatience under the suffering caused by his illness, but is a reasonable sorrow, because he has incurred it through his own fault, or else because others, from the trouble he gives them or from some other causes, are enduring weariness or vexation.

In like manner the ambitious man, who frets himself because of some unattained honour, does not attribute his discontent to his own pride and vanity, but to some other cause which he knows very well would give him no concern, unless it touched himself. So neither would the sick man care, if they, whose trouble and fatigue on his account seem to give him so much vexation, should have the same trouble and care on account of another's sickness. A proof sufficiently plain, that the root of some men's sorrow is not concern for others, or for aught else but an abhorrence of all that crosses their own will.

Therefore, lest thou fall into this and other errors, bear with patience, as I have told thee, every trial and every sorrow, from whatever cause it may arise.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE LAST ASSAULT AND DEVICE ABOVE-NAMED,  
BY WHICH THE DEVIL TRIES TO MAKE VIRTUES  
ALREADY ACQUIRED THE OCCASION OF OUR RUIN,

**THE cunning and malignant serpent fails not to tempt**

us by his artifice, even through the very virtues to which we have attained, that they may become an occasion of ruin to us, while we, regarding them and ourselves with complacency, exalt ourselves on high, thereby to fall into the sin of pride and vain-glory.

To preserve thyself from this danger, ever fight, placing thyself on the safe and level ground of a true and deep conviction that thou art nothing, that thou knowest nothing, that thou canst do nothing, and hast nothing but misery and sin, and dost deserve nothing but eternal damnation.

And thus entrenched and fixed within the limits of this truth, suffer not thyself to be enticed therefrom so much as a hair's breadth, either by any wicked thought, or aught else which may befall thee, well convinced that all these are so many enemies, who would slay or wound thee, shouldst thou yield thyself into their hands.

That thou mayest learn to acquit thee well in this exercise of the true knowledge of thine own nothingness, observe the following rule.

As often as thou dost reflect upon thyself and thine own works, consider always what thou art of thyself, and not what thou art by the aid of God's grace; and so esteem thyself, as thou dost thus find thyself to be. If thou consider the time before thou wert in existence, thou wilt see thyself to have been, during all that abyss of eternity, a mere nothing, and that thou didst nothing, and couldst do nothing toward giving thyself an existence.

Next, consider the time since thou didst receive a being from the sole bounty of God. And here also if thou leave to Him that which is His own

(His continual care over thee which sustains thee every moment of thy life), what art thou of thyself but still a mere nothing?

For undoubtedly, did He leave thee one moment to thyself, thou wouldst instantly return to thy first nothingness, from whence thou wast taken by His Almighty Hand.

It is clear then that thou hast no reason, in this natural state, and viewed in thyself alone, to esteem thyself, or to desire to be esteemed by others.

As to the life of grace, and the operation of good works, what good or meritorious deed could thy nature perform by itself, if deprived of Divine assistance?

For considering on the other hand the number of thy past transgressions, and moreover the multitude of other sins from which God's pitiful Hand has alone withheld thee, thou wilt find that thine iniquities, by a multiplication not only of days and years, but also of acts and habits of sin (for one evil habit draws another after it), would have become of almost nameless amount, and so made of thee another infernal Lucifer.

Hence, if thou wouldst not rob God of the praise due to His goodness, but cleave faithfully to thy Lord, thou must learn, day by day, to think more humbly of thyself.

And be very careful in this judgment to deal honestly with thyself, or it may do thee no little harm.

For if in the knowledge of thine own iniquity, thou surpass a man who, in his blindness, thinks himself to be something, thou wilt lose exceedingly, and wilt make thyself far worse than him in the operations of the will, if thou desire to be esteemed and

regarded by men, for that which thou knowest thyself not to be.

If then thou desirest that the consciousness of thy sinfulness and vileness should shield thee from thine enemies, and make thee dear to God, thou must not only despise thyself, as unworthy of any good, and deserving of all evil, but thou must love to be despised by others, hating honours, rejoicing in shame, and stooping on every possible occasion to offices which other men hold in contempt.

Thou must make no account at all of their opinion, lest it deter thee from this holy exercise. Be sure, however, that the end in view be solely thine own humiliation and self-discipline, and that thou be not influenced by a certain lurking pride, and presumptuous spirit, which oftentimes, under some fair pretext, causes one to make little or no account of the opinions of others.

And if, because of any good gift which God has bestowed on thee, thou shouldst perchance be esteemed, or loved, or praised by others, keep steadily collected within thyself, and be not moved one step from the aforesaid truth and just judgment; but turning first to God, say to Him with all thine heart:—

“O Lord, may I never take to myself Thy honour and Thy graces; to Thee be praise, and honour, and glory, to me confusion of face;” and then say mentally of him who praises thee, “Whence is it that he accounts me good, since verily my God Alone, and His works ‘are good?’”

For by acting in this manner, and by giving back to the Lord that which is His own, thou wilt keep thine enemies afar off, and dispose thyself to receive greater gifts and favours from thy God.

And if the memory of good works expose thee to any risk of vanity, view them instantly not as thine own but as God's, and, as if addressing them, thou mayest say in thine heart: "I know not how ye did appear and originate in my mind, for ye have not your being from me; but the good God, and His grace, created, nourished, and preserved you. Him Alone then will I acknowledge as your true and first Parent, Him will I thank, and to Him will I give all the praise."

Consider, next, that not only do all the works which thou hast done, fall short of the light which has been given thee to know them, and the grace to execute them, but also that they are very imperfect, and but too far removed from that pure intention and due diligence and fervour, with which they should be performed, and which should ever accompany them.

If then thou wilt well consider this, thou wilt see reason rather for shame, than for vain complacency, because it is but too true that the graces which we receive pure and perfect from God are sullied in their use by our imperfections.

Further, compare thy works with those of the saints, and other servants of God; for by such comparison thou wilt clearly see that thy best and greatest are of base alloy, and of little worth.

Next, measure them by those which Christ wrought for thee in the Mystery of His Life and of His continual Cross; and setting aside the consideration of His Divinity, view His works in themselves alone, consider both the fervency and the purity of the love with which they were wrought, and thou wilt see that all thy works are indeed as nothing.



And lastly, if thou wilt raise thy thoughts to the Divinity and the boundless Majesty of thy God, and the service which He deserves, thou wilt see plainly, that great fear, rather than vanity, must be the result of all thy works. Therefore, in all thy ways, in all thy works, however holy they be, thou must cry unto thy Lord with all thine heart, saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Further, I would advise thee to be backward in making known the gifts which God may have bestowed on thee; for this is almost always displeasing to thy Lord, as He Himself plainly shows us in the following lesson:—

Appearing once in the form of an infant to one of His pure and devoted creatures, she asked Him with great simplicity to recite the Angelical Salutation. He readily began: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women," and then stopped, being unwilling to praise Himself, in the words which follow. And while she was praying Him to proceed, He withdrew Himself from her, leaving His servant full of consolation, because of the heavenly doctrine which, by His example, He had thus revealed to her.

Do thou likewise, my daughter, learn to humble thyself, and acknowledge thyself and all thy works to be the very nothing that thou art.

This is the foundation of all other virtues. God, before we existed, created us out of nothing; and now that through Him we do exist, He wills that the whole spiritual building should be built on this foundation; i. e. the knowledge that of ourselves we are nothing. And the deeper we advance in this knowledge, the loftier will be the building. And

in proportion as we dig up the earth of our wretchedness, so will be the number of solid stones which the Divine Architect will lay to help the building on.

And never persuade thyself, my daughter, that thou canst ever dig deep enough; on the contrary, believe this of thyself; that if any thing belonging to a creature could be infinite, such would be thine unworthiness.

With this knowledge, if duly realized, we possess all good; without it, we are little better than nothing, though we do the works of all the Saints, and be continually absorbed in God.

O blessed knowledge, which makes us happy on earth and glorious in heaven! O light, which, issuing from darkness, makes the soul bright and clear! O unknown joy, which sparkles amid our impurities! O known nothingness, which makes us lords of all!

I should never be weary of speaking of it to thee; if thou wilt praise God, accuse thyself, and desire to be reproached by others. Abase thyself with all, and place thyself beneath all, if thou wilt exalt Him in thee, and thyself in Him. Wouldest thou find Him, exalt not thyself, or He will fly from thee. Humble thyself to the utmost, and He will seek thee and embrace thee. And He will receive thee and embrace thee the more lovingly, the more thou abasest thyself in thine own sight, and the more thou delightest to be esteemed vile by others, and to be spurned as a thing abominable. Account thyself unworthy of so great a gift, bestowed upon thee by thy God, Who suffered shame for thee, in order to unite Himself to thee. Fail not to return Him continual thanks for it, and hold thyself obliged to those who have given

thee occasion to humble thyself, and still more to those who have trampled upon thee, and who think, moreover, that thou endurest it reluctantly, and not with good will. Were this even so, yet shouldest thou show no sign of it outwardly. If, notwithstanding these many considerations, which are but too true, the subtlety of the devil and our own ignorance and evil inclinations yet prevail over us, so that thoughts of self-exaltation will still molest us, and make an impression on our hearts, then is the time to humble ourselves the more in our own eyes; for we see by this proof that we have advanced but little in the spiritual life, and in the true knowledge of self, inasmuch as we cannot free ourselves from those annoyances which spring from the root of our empty pride. So from the poison we shall extract honey, and healing from the wounds.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### SOME ADVICE AS TO THE CONQUEST OF EVIL PASSIONS, AND THE ACQUISITION OF FRESH VIRTUES.

THOUGH I have said so much to thee on the course which thou must pursue, in order to conquer self, and adorn it with all holiness; there still remain other points, concerning which I would warn thee.

And first. In thine endeavours after holiness, never be persuaded to use such spiritual exercises formally, selecting (as it were) different virtues for different days of the week, setting apart one for the acquisition of each.

But let this be the order of thy warfare and of

thine exercise, to combat those passions which have always injured thee, and still continue to assault and injure thee, and to adorn thyself with their opposite virtues, and this as perfectly as possible.

For, having once acquired these virtues, all others will be readily attained as occasions offer, and with little comparative exertion ; and occasions will never be wanting, inasmuch as all the virtues are linked together in one chain, and he who possesses one in perfection, has all the others ready waiting at the portal of his heart.

Secondly. Never set a fixed time for the attainment of any virtue, neither days, nor weeks, nor years ; but as one newly born, as a soldier yet untried, fight thy way, and go forward towards the height of perfection.

Never stand still, even for a moment ; for to stand still in the way of holiness and perfection, is not to take breath or courage, but to fall back, or become weaker than before.

By standing still, I mean, flattering ourselves that we have perfectly attained to the virtue in question, and taking less heed of the occasions which call us to the exercise of that virtue, or of little failings therein.

Therefore be careful, be fervent, be watchful, that thou neglect not the slightest opportunity for the exercise of any virtue.

Love all occasions which lead to it, and especially those which are attended with most difficulty, seeing that habits are more quickly formed, and more deeply rooted, the greater the difficulties to be surmounted ; therefore love those which offer thee such difficulties.

Flee those only, and that with rapid step, with all speed, and diligence, which may lead thee to the temptation of the flesh.

Thirdly. Be prudent and discreet in those exercises which may be injurious to the body, such as self-chastisement by means of disciplines, hair cloths, fasts, and vigils, meditations, and the like ; for these must be attained slowly and by degrees, as will be presently explained.

As to other virtues, wholly internal, such as the love of God, contempt for the world, self-abasement, hatred of sin and of sinful passions, meekness and patience, love towards all men, towards those who injure us, and such like ; it is not necessary to attain these little by little, nor to mount by degrees to perfection in them, but strive at once, with all thy might, to practise each one as perfectly as possible.

Fourthly. Let thy whole thought, thy desire, thy heart think of nothing, crave nothing, long for nothing, but to conquer that passion with which thou art struggling, and to acquire its opposite virtue. Be this all thy world, thy heaven, thy earth, thy whole treasure ; and all with the sole view to please God.

Whether eating or fasting, labouring or resting, watching or sleeping, at home or abroad, whether engaged in devotion or in manual labour, let all be directed to the conquest and suppression of this passion, and to the acquisition of the opposite virtue.

Fifthly. Wage unremitting war against earthly pleasures and comforts, and so will all vices have little power to assail thee, for they all spring from the one root of pleasure. Therefore when this is cut away by hatred of self, they lose their strength and power.

For if thou wouldest seek to fight against some particular sin or pleasure with one hand, and with the other dally with other earthly enjoyments, (though the guilt attached to them be not mortal, but venial,) hard will be the battle and very bloody, doubtful and rare the victory. Therefore keep ever in mind these Divine words :

“He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”—John xii. 25.

“Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—Rom. viii. 12, 13.

Sixthly and lastly. I warn thee, that it would be well, and, perhaps, necessary, for thee to make, first, a general confession, with every thing which belongs to its due performance, that thou mayest be better assured of thy Lord’s favour, to Whom Alone thou must look for grace and victory.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

VIRTUES ARE TO BE ACQUIRED GRADUALLY, BY EXERCISING OURSELVES IN SEVERAL DEGREES OF THEM, AND GIVING OUR ATTENTION FIRST TO ONE, AND THEN TO ANOTHER.

THOUGH the true soldier of Christ, who aspires to the height of perfection, should set no bounds to his progress, still there are some degrees of spiritual fervour which require to be bridled with a certain discretion, lest, being at first embraced with too much ardour,

**they should fail us, and leave us in the midst of our race. Hence, besides what has been said as to moderation in external exercises, it is well to know, that even internal virtues are best attained by degrees, and little by little; for thus that which is small at first, soon becomes great and enduring. Thus, for example, we should not ordinarily attempt to rejoice in afflictions, and to wish for them, till we had first passed the lower degrees of the virtue of patience.**

Neither do I advise thee to give thy chief attention to all, or to many virtues at once, but to one at a time, and afterwards to the others; for thus will the virtuous habit be more easily and firmly planted in the soul. For by the constant exercise of a single virtue, the memory recurs to it more promptly on all occasions, the intellect becomes more quick at discerning new methods and reasons for attaining to it, and the will inclines more readily and fervently to follow it, than if occupied with many virtues at one and the same time.

And by means of this uniform exercise, the acts which have relation to a single virtue are performed with the less toil, from the conformity between them. The one calls to and helps the other like unto it, and by this likeness they make a greater impression within us; the ground of the heart being prepared and disposed for the reception of the new seed, by having already afforded room for similar fruits.

These reasons have the greater force, as we know assuredly, that whoever exercises himself well in one virtue, learns at the same time the way to exercise himself in another, and thus all grow together with

the increase of one, through the inseparable connexion which exists between them, as rays proceeding from one and the same Divine Light.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

OF THE MEANS WHEREBY VIRTUES ARE ACQUIRED,  
AND HOW WE SHOULD MAKE USE OF THEM, BY  
ATTENDING FOR SOME SPACE OF TIME TO ONE  
VIRTUE ONLY.

FOR the attainment of holiness, besides all that has been said above, we need a great and generous soul; a will that is neither slack nor remiss, but firm and resolute; and withal a certain expectation of having to pass through many bitter and adverse trials.

And further, there are particular inclinations and affections which we may acquire, by frequently reflecting how pleasing they are to God, how excellent and noble in themselves, and how useful and necessary to us, inasmuch as from them, all perfection has its origin and end.

Let us, then, every morning make stedfast resolutions to exercise ourselves therein according to the circumstances which may probably occur in the course of the day, during which we should frequently examine ourselves to see whether we have performed them or not, renewing them afterwards more earnestly. And all this with especial regard to that virtue which we have in hand.



So also let the examples of the Saints, and our prayers and meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ, so necessary in every spiritual exercise, be applied principally to that particular virtue in which we are now exercising ourselves.

Let us do the same on all occasions (as we shall presently show more particularly), however diverse in their kind.

Let us so inure ourselves to acts of virtue, both internal and external, that we may come at last to perform them with the same promptness and facility with which, in times past, we performed others agreeable to our natural will. And (as we said before) the more opposed such acts are to these natural wishes, the more quickly will they introduce the good habit into our soul.

The sacred words of holy Scripture, either uttered with the lips, or pondered in the heart, as may best suit our case, have a marvellous power to aid us in this exercise. We should, therefore, have many such in readiness, in reference to the virtue we wish to practise, and these we should go on repeating during the day, and especially at each rising of the rebellious passion. For example, if we are striving after the attainment of patience, we may repeat the following words, or others like them.

“My children, suffer patiently the wrath that is come upon you from God.”—Baruch iv. 25.

“The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.”—Psalm ix. 18.

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”—Proverbs xvi. 32.

“In your patience possess ye your souls.”—Luke xxi. 19.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”—Hebrews xii. 1.

To the same effect we may in like manner use the following, or similar prayers.

“When, my God, shall this heart of mine be armed with the shield of patience?”

“When shall I bear every trouble with a quiet mind, that so I may please my Lord?”

“Oh! most dear sufferings, which liken me unto my Lord Jesus Crucified for me!”

“Sole Life of my soul! shall I ever, for Thy Glory, live contented amidst a thousand agonies?”

“Blessed shall I be, if, in the midst of the fire of tribulation, I burn with desire for even greater sufferings?”

Let us use these short prayers, and others, suitable to our progress in holiness, that so we may acquire the spirit of devotion.

These short prayers are called ejaculations, because they are as darts jaculated or darted towards heaven. They have great power to excite us to virtue, and will penetrate even to the Heart of God, if only as by two wings they be accompanied by the two following things.

The one is a full persuasion that our exercise of virtue is well pleasing to our God.

The other, a true and fervent desire to attain unto it, for the sole end of pleasing thereby His Divine Majesty.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THAT IN THE EXERCISE OF VIRTUE WE MUST WALK  
IN CONTINUAL WATCHFULNESS.

ONE of the most important and necessary means for the attainment of virtue, besides what has been taught above, is to press forward continually towards the end which we have proposed to ourselves ; else by only standing still, we are turning back.

For when we cease from acts of virtue, it follows of necessity that many unruly passions are generated within us by the violent inclination of the senses, and by other influences from without, thereby destroying, or, at least, diminishing virtue ; and, moreover, we lose many gifts and graces with which our Lord might have rewarded our farther progress. Therefore is the spiritual journey different from that of the earthly traveller ; for he, by standing still, loses nothing of the ground already gained, as is the case with him who journeys heavenward.

And, moreover, the weariness of the earthly pilgrim increases with the continuance of his bodily motion, while in the spiritual journey, the farther a man advances, the greater the increase of his vigour and strength.

For by the exercise of virtue, the resistance of the soul's inferior part, which made the way hard and wearisome, becomes weaker day by day ; while the superior part, where the virtue resides, is in the same proportion strengthened and established.

Hence, as we advance in holiness, the pain which

accompanied the progress gradually diminishes, and a certain secret joy, which by the Divine operation is mingled with that pain, increases hourly more and more. And thus, going on with greater ease and delight, from virtue to virtue, we reach at last the mountain top, where the perfected spirit works henceforth without weariness, nay, rather with joy and ecstasy, because having now tamed and conquered its unruly passions, and overcome itself and all created things, it dwells for ever blessed in the Bosom of the Most High, and there, while sweetly labouring, takes its rest.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

THAT AS WE MUST ALWAYS CONTINUE IN THE EXERCISE OF ALL VIRTUE, SO WE MUST NOT SHUN ANY OPPORTUNITY WHICH PRESENTS ITSELF FOR THEIR ACQUISITION.

WE have seen clearly enough, that in the way which leads to perfection, we must ever go forward without stopping.

To this end, we should be very vigilant and careful not to let slip any opportunity which presents itself for the acquisition of any virtue. For they have very little knowledge of this way who withdraw themselves, as much as they can, from such adverse things as might tend greatly to this end.

For if (not to depart from my usual illustration) thou wouldest acquire the habit of patience, it is not well to withdraw thyself from those persons,

actions, or thoughts, which move thee to impatience.

And therefore thou must not withdraw from the society of any, because it is disagreeable; but while conversing and holding intercourse with those who most annoy thee, keep thy will always ready and disposed to endure whatever may befall thee, however wearisome and annoying; for otherwise thou wilt never inure thyself to patience.

In like manner, if any occupation be irksome to thee, either on its own account, or because of the person who imposed it on thee, or because it hinders thee from doing something else more pleasing to thee, do not therefore shrink from undertaking it and persevering in it, though it disquiet thee, and though thou mightest find peace by neglecting it; for this would be no true peace, as not proceeding from a soul purified from passion, and adorned with holiness; neither couldst thou ever in this way learn to suffer.

I would say the same of distressing thoughts, which at times will harass and disturb thy mind. There is no need to drive them entirely from thee, for besides the pain they cause thee, they serve also to accustom thee to bear contradictions.

And he who would advise thee differently, would teach thee rather to fly from toil, than to attain to that virtue which thou desirest.

It is very true, that it becomes every man, and especially the untried soldier, to skirmish and defend himself on these occasions with vigilance and dexterity, now confronting, now evading them, according to the measure of spiritual strength and virtue to which he may have attained.

But for all this, he must never actually turn back and retreat, so as to remove himself from all opportunity of contradiction; for if we thereby save ourselves, even for the time, from the peril of falling, we shall risk being more exposed to future attacks of impatience, not being armed and fortified beforehand by the exercise of the opposite virtue.

This advice, however, applies not to the sins of the flesh, of which we have already spoken more particularly.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THAT WE SHOULD HIGHLY CHERISH ALL OPPORTUNITIES OF FIGHTING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF VIRTUES; AND CHIEFLY THOSE WHICH PRESENT THE GREATEST DIFFICULTIES.

I would not, my daughter, have thee merely not shun the opportunities which may present themselves to thee for the attainment of different virtues; this will not satisfy me; I would have thee esteem them as things of great price and value—I would have thee seek them and embrace them joyfully, whenever they come before thee; and those should be most dear and precious to thee which are most distasteful to thy senses.

To this (by the Divine assistance) thou wilt be enabled to attain, if thou wilt impress strongly upon thy mind the following considerations.

First. That opportunities are means adapted, nay, necessary for acquiring virtue. Hence in praying to the Lord for virtues, thou art by consequence ask-

ing for occasions of them also, else would thy prayer be vain, and thou wouldest be contradicting thyself, and tempting thy God; who does not ordinarily bestow patience without tribulation, nor humility without humiliations.

And the same may be said of all virtues, which are most assuredly attained by means of crosses. And the more painful these are, the more effectually do they aid us, and therefore the dearer and more welcome should they be to us. For acts of virtue, performed under such circumstances, are more generous, and more full of earnestness, and open to us more easily and more quickly the way to holiness.

But we ought also to value, and not to leave without its appropriate exercise, the most trifling opportunity, though it be but a word or a look, which crosses our will, because the acts thereby made are more frequent, though less intense than those produced by us in great difficulties.

The other consideration (of which I have already spoken) is this, that all events which befall us come from God for our good, that we may reap fruit therefrom.

And though (as we have said elsewhere) some of these (such as our own failings, or those of others) cannot be said to be *of* God, Who willeth not sin, yet are they *from* Him, inasmuch as He permits them, and though able to hinder them, hinders them not. But all the sorrows and afflictions which come upon us, either by our own fault, or by the malice of others, are both from God, and of God; because He concurs in them; and that which He would not have us *do*, as being full of deformity, beyond measure

hateful in His pure Eyes, He would yet have us *suffer* for our greater advancement in holiness, or for other wise reasons unknown to us.

Seeing then that it is assuredly our Lord's will that we suffer willingly any cross which may come to us, either from others or from our own evil deeds, to say, as many do in excuse for their impatience, that God willeth not evil, but abhors it, is but a vain pretext, whereby to cover our own faults, and refuse the cross, which we know to be His will that we should bear.

Nay, I will say farther, that comparing both cases, our Lord is better pleased with our patient endurance of trials, which come from the wickedness of men, especially of such as we have served and benefited, than of annoyance arising from other grievous accidents. And this because our proud nature is, for the most part, more humbled by the former than by the latter, and also, because by willingly suffering them, we do above measure please and magnify our God, co-operating with Him in that wherein His unspeakable Goodness and Omnipotence shine forth most brightly; namely, in extracting from the deadly poison of malice and wickedness the sweet and precious fruit of holiness and virtue.

Know, therefore, my daughter, that no sooner does the Lord perceive in us an earnest desire to attempt and persevere in so glorious an undertaking, than He prepares for us a cup of the strongest temptations and hardest trials, that we may drink it at the appointed hour; and we, acknowledging therein His love, and our own good, should receive it willingly and blindly, confidently and promptly, drinking it to the very dregs, as a medicine, compounded by a



Hand which cannot err, of ingredients the more profitable to the soul, in proportion as they are bitter in themselves.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

HOW WE MAY AVAIL OURSELVES OF VARIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EXERCISE OF A SINGLE VIRTUE.

WE have seen above, that it is more profitable to exercise ourselves for a time in a single virtue, than in many at once ; and that we should regulate accordingly the opportunities we meet with, however varied. Now learn how this may be done with tolerable facility.

It may happen that the same day, or at the very hour we are reprov'd for some good action, or blamed for some other reason, we may be harshly denied some favour we have asked, or, perhaps, some mere trifle ; we may be unjustly suspected of evil, or we may be called to endure some bodily pain, or some petty annoyance (such as a dish badly dressed) ; or some more heavy distress, and harder to be borne, (such as this wretched life is full of,) may befall us.

Though in the variety of these, or similar occurrences, we may perform various acts of virtue, yet if we would keep to the rule laid down, we shall continue to exercise ourselves in acts wholly conformable to the virtue we have at the time in hand ; as, for example :

If, when these opportunities present themselves, we are exercising ourselves in patience, we shall bear them all willingly and with gladness of heart.

If our exercise be that of humility, we shall in all these little crosses acknowledge ourselves to be deserving of every possible ill.

If of obedience, we shall submit ourselves at once to the Almighty Hand of God, as well as to all created things, rational or even inanimate, that may have caused us these annoyances; and this to please Him, because He has willed it so to be.

If of poverty, we shall be well content to be stripped and robbed of all earthly consolations, whether great or small.

If of charity, we shall perform acts of love, both towards our neighbour, as the instrument of good to us, and towards our Lord God, as the first and loving Cause, whence proceed these annoyances, or by Whom they are permitted, for our exercise and spiritual improvement.

From what has been said of the various accidents which may befall us every day, we may also understand how, during a single trial of long continuance, such as sickness, or other like affliction, we may yet go on performing acts of that virtue, in which we are then exercising ourselves.

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## CHAPTER XL.

OF THE TIME TO BE GIVEN TO THE EXERCISE OF EACH SEVERAL VIRTUE, AND OF THE SIGNS OF OUR PROGRESS.

THE time to be given to the exercise of each several virtue is not for me to determine. This must be regulated by the state and necessity of individuals,

the progress they are making in their spiritual course, and by the judgment of their spiritual guide.

But if we set ourselves faithfully to work, in the manner and with the diligence I have described, there is no doubt but that, in a few weeks' time, we shall have made no little progress.

It is a sign of progress in holiness, if amid dryness, and darkness, and anguish of soul, and the withdrawal of spiritual joys, we go on firmly in our exercises of virtue.

Another clear indication will be, the degree of resistance made by the senses to the performance of acts of virtue ; for the weaker this resistance, the greater our advancement. When, then, we cease to experience any contradiction and rebellion in the inferior and sensual part, and particularly in cases of sudden and unexpected attacks, we may look upon it as a token of having attained to the virtue.

And the greater the alacrity and joyfulness of spirit which accompanies these acts, the greater profit may we hope to have derived from this exercise.

I warn thee, however, that we should never assume, as a certainty, that we have attained to any virtue, or entirely subdued any one passion, even though, for a long time, and after many struggles, we may have ceased to feel its motions within us. For here also the artifices and workings of Satan, and our own deceitful nature, may find place ; since oftentimes that which is really vice seems to our lurking pride like virtue. Besides, if we look to the perfection to which God invites us, we shall hardly persuade ourselves (however great the progress we have made in the way of holiness) that we have even entered upon its threshold.

Therefore, as a young soldier, and, as it were, a new-born babe just beginning to struggle, do thou return continually to thy first exercises, as though thou hadst hitherto done nothing.

And remember, my daughter, to attend rather to advancement in holiness than to an examination of thy progress; for the Lord God, the true and only Searcher of our hearts, gives this knowledge to some, and withholds it from others, according as He sees that it will lead to pride, or to humiliation; and, like a loving Father, He removes a danger from one, while to another He offers an opportunity of increasing in holiness. Therefore, though the soul perceive not her own progress, let her still continue these her exercises, for she shall see it when it pleases the Lord to show it to her for her greater benefit.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

THAT WE MUST NOT YIELD TO THE WISH OF BEING DELIVERED FROM THE TRIALS WE ARE ENDURING PATIENTLY; AND OF THE WAY TO REGULATE ALL OUR DESIRES, SO AS TO ADVANCE IN HOLINESS.

WHEN thou findest thyself in any painful position whatsoever, and bearest it patiently, take heed lest the devil, or thine own self-love, persuade thee to wish to be delivered from it; for thou mayest thereby incur two great evils.

First. If this wish did not at once rob thee of the virtue of patience, it would at least gradually dispose thee to impatience.

Secondly. Thy patience would become defective,

and would be recompensed by God only according to the duration of the suffering; whereas, if thou hadst not desired to be freed from it, but hadst yielded thyself up wholly to His Divine Goodness, thy suffering, though but of an hour's duration, nay, even less, would have been owned by thy Lord as a long enduring service.

In this, then, and in all things, make it thine invariable rule, to keep thy wishes so far removed from every other object, that they may aim simply and solely at their true and only end, i. e., the Will of God. For in this way will they be ever right and true; and thou, in any cross accident whatsoever, wilt be not only tranquil, but contented, because, as nothing can happen without the Supreme Will, thou, by willing the same, wilt come, at all times, to will at once and to have, all that happens and all that thou desirest.

This (which must not be understood either of our own or others' sins, because God wills *them* not) applies to every chastisement arising from these or other causes, though so keen and searching as to reach the very bottom of the heart, and to dry up even the roots of the natural life; for this is the cross wherewith it pleases God sometimes to favour His nearest and dearest friends.

And what I say of the patience which it is thy duty to practise in all cases, is to be understood also of that portion of any trouble which yet remains, and which God wills us to bear, even after we have used all lawful means of relief.

And even these means should be regulated by the disposal and Will of God, Who has appointed them

to be used, not to please ourselves, but because He so wills it; nor as loving or desiring deliverance from suffering, beyond what His service and Will require.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

HOW TO RESIST THE DEVIL, WHEN HE SEEKS TO DECEIVE US BY MEANS OF INDISCREET ACTS OF DEVOTION.

WHEN the wily devil perceives that we are walking straight forward in the path of holiness with fervent and well regulated desires, being unable to draw us aside by open allurements, he transforms himself into an angel of light, and by friendly suggestions, quotations from Scripture, and the examples of the Saints, importunately urges us to aspire indiscreetly after the height of perfection, that so he may cause us thence to fall headlong. To this end he encourages us to chastise the body with great severity, by disciplines, fastings, hair-cloths, and other like mortifications, that he may either tempt us to pride, by thinking we are doing great things, (a temptation this which especially besets women) or that we may, by some sickness, be disabled from the exercise of good works, or else, that from over-weariness and pain we may take a dislike and abhorrence to spiritual exercises; and thus by little and little we wax cold in the way of godliness, and at last give ourselves up with greater avidity than at first to worldly pleasures and amusements. This has been the end of many, who, follow-

ing presumptuously the impulse of an indiscreet zeal, have, in their excessive outward austerities, gone beyond the measure of their own virtue, and so have perished in their own inventions, and become the sport of malicious fiends. This would not have befallen them, had they well considered what we have been saying, and remembered that these acts of painful self-discipline, though praiseworthy and profitable in those who have corresponding strength of body and humility of spirit, must yet be attempered to each man's state and condition.

And to those who cannot labour with the saints, by means of similar austerities, there will not be wanting other opportunities of imitating their life, by strong and effectual desires and fervent prayers, aspiring after the most glorious crown of Christ's true soldier, by despising the whole world and themselves also—by giving themselves up to solitude and silence—by meekness and humility towards all men—by patient suffering under ills—by doing good to those most opposed to them, and by keeping themselves from every fault, however trivial—all which is a thing more acceptable to God than painful bodily exercises. With regard to these, I would advise thee to be rather discreetly sparing, in order to be able, if needs be, to increase them, than by certain excesses to run the risk of being compelled at last to relinquish them altogether. I say this, being well persuaded that thou art not likely to fall into the error of some, who, though they pass for spiritual persons, are yet enticed and deluded, by deceitful nature, into an over-anxious care for the preservation of their bodily health. So jealous and fearful are they of the least thing that might affect it, that they live in per-

petual doubt and fear of losing it. There is nothing of which they think more, and speak more willingly, than of the ordering of their lives in this respect. Hence they are ever careful to have food suited rather to their taste than to their stomach, which is often enfeebled by over-delicacy. And whereas, this is done under the plea of being thereby able to serve God better, it is, in fact, but a vain wish to conciliate two capital enemies, the spirit and the flesh, an attempt which benefits neither, nay, injures both; for this same over-carefulness impairs the health of the one, and the devotion of the other.

Therefore a certain freedom in our way of life is, in all respects, safer and more profitable, not unaccompanied, however, by the discretion of which I have spoken, having regard to different constitutions and conditions of life, which cannot all be subjected to the same rule.

I would say further, that in the pursuit of inward holiness, as well as of outward devotion, we should proceed with some moderation, as has been shown above on the subject of the gradual acquisition of virtues.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

OF THE POWER OF OUR OWN EVIL INCLINATIONS,  
AND THE INSTIGATIONS OF THE DEVIL TO IN-  
CLINE US TO FORM RASH JUDGMENTS OF OUR  
NEIGHBOURS; AND OF THE WAY TO RESIST THIS  
TEMPTATION.

FROM the above-mentioned vice of self-esteem and self-conceit arises another, which is in the highest



degree injurious to us, i. e., rash judgment of our neighbour, which leads us to despise, disparage, and look down upon him. And this fault, as it arises at first from our pride and evil inclination, so is it by the same pride voluntarily nourished and increased, for as it increases, so does pride also increase, insensibly humouring and deluding us. Since the more we presume to exalt self, so much the more do we unconsciously depress others, fancying ourselves free from those imperfections, which we think we discover in them.

And the wily demon, who perceives in us this most evil disposition of mind, is constantly on the watch to open our eyes, and to keep them awake, to see, examine, and exaggerate the failings of others.

Careless men know not, and believe not, how he studies and contrives to impress upon our minds the little defects of this person or that, when he cannot prevail on us to notice great faults.

Therefore, if he be on the watch to do thee hurt, be thou also awake, lest thou fall into his traps. And as soon as he brings before thee any failing of thy neighbour, reject the thought at once, and if thou still feel a temptation to pass judgment upon it, yield not to it. Consider that the office of Judge has not been committed to thee, and that even if it were, thou wouldest be unable to form a just judgment, beset as thou art by a thousand passions, and but too much disposed to think evil without just cause.

But as an effectual remedy against rash judgments, I would remind thee to occupy thy thoughts with the defects of thine own heart, for thou wilt hourly perceive more and more clearly how much thou hast to

do and to work, in thyself, and for thyself, and wilt have neither time nor inclination to attend to the doings of others.

Besides, by performing this exercise faithfully, thou wilt be enabled to purge thine inward sight more and more from the malignant humours whence proceeds this pestilent vice.

And know, that whenever thou unhappily thinkest any evil of thy brother, there is some root of that same evil in thine own heart, which, in proportion, as it is ill-disposed itself, gives a ready reception to any similar object with which it meets.

Therefore, whenever it comes into thy mind to judge others for some fault, despise thine own self, as guilty of the same, and say in thine heart, "How can a wretch, such as I am, laden with this and far worse faults, dare to lift up my head, to see and judge the faults of others?"

And thus the weapon which, directed against another, would have wounded thee, will, being used against thyself, bring healing to thy wounds.

If the error committed be clear and open, find some compassionate excuse for it, and believe that there are in thy brother some hidden virtues, for the sake of which the Lord has permitted him to fall, or to retain for some time this failing, that he may become more vile in his own eyes, and, that being also despised by others on this account, he may reap the fruit of humiliation, and render himself more acceptable to God, and so his gain become, by this means, greater than his loss.

And if the sin be not only manifest, but grievous and wilfully obstinate, turn thy thoughts upon God's tremendous judgments. Here thou wilt see men who

were once most wicked, attaining to high degrees of sanctity; and others who seemed to have attained the sublimest heights of perfection, fallen into the lowest depths of perdition.

Therefore stand always in fear and trembling for thyself more than for any other.

And be thou very sure that every good and kindly feeling towards thy neighbour is the gift of the Holy Spirit; and that all rash judgment, all contempt and bitterness towards him, flows from our own evil hearts, and from the suggestions of Satan.

If then any imperfection of another have made an impression on thy mind, rest not, give no sleep to thine eyes, until, to the utmost of thy power, thou have effaced it from thy heart.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### ON PRAYER.

IF distrust of self, trust in God, and spiritual exercises, be as needful in this combat as has been shown above, needful above all is prayer, (the fourth weapon before-mentioned,) by means of which we may obtain, not these alone, but all other good things from the Lord our God.

For prayer is the instrument for obtaining all the graces which flow down upon us from that Divine Source of Goodness and Love.

By prayer (if thou use it well) thou wilt put a sword into the Hand of God, wherewith to fight and conquer for thee.

And to use it well, thou must be well exercised in the following practices, or be striving to become so.

First. There must live within thee an earnest desire to serve His Divine Majesty in all things, and in the way most acceptable to Him.

In order to kindle this desire within thee, thou wilt consider well :

That God is supremely worthy to be served and honoured for His Supreme Excellencies, His Wisdom, Goodness, Majesty, Beauty, and all His other infinite Perfections.

That to serve thee, He toiled and suffered three and thirty years, binding up and healing the putrifying sores, envenomed by the poison of sin, not with oil, or wine, or linen, but with the precious Stream that flowed from His most Sacred Veins, and with His most Pure Flesh, torn by scourges, thorns, and nails.

And consider further the great value of this service. By it we gain the mastery over ourselves and Satan, and are made sons of God Himself.

Secondly. Thou must have a lively faith and confidence that the Lord will give thee all things needful for His service and thy good.

This holy confidence is the vessel which Divine Mercy fills with the treasures of His Grace ; and the larger and the more capacious it is, the richer will our prayer return into our own bosom.

For how shall the Unchangeable and Almighty God fail to make us partakers of His gifts, when He has Himself commanded us to ask for them, promising to give us His Spirit also, if with faith and perseverance we ask for It ?

Thirdly. When thou dost address thyself to prayer, let it be in the intention to will God's Will alone, and not thine own, as well in asking, as in obtaining what

thou askest : that is, that thou be moved to pray because God wills it, and that thou desire to be heard also in-so-far as He wills it. In short, thine intencion should be to unite thy will to the Will of God, and not to draw God's Will to thine.

And this, because thy will, being infected and spoiled by self-love, very often errs and knows not what it asks ; but the Divine Will, being always united to ineffable Goodness, can never err. Therefore is the Will of God the rule and ruler of all other wills, and It deserves and wills to be followed and obeyed by all.

Thou shouldest therefore always ask such things as are conformable to God's Will ; and if thou doubt whether any be so, ask it on the condition of willing it, if it be the Lord's Will to grant it thee.

And such things as thou certainly knowest to be pleasing unto Him, as are all virtues, thou wilt ask for, rather in order to serve and please Him, than for any other end or motive, even though spiritual.

Fourthly. Be careful in going to prayer to be adorned with works corresponding to thy petitions, and after thou hast prayed, labour the more earnestly to fit thyself for the virtue and the grace thou desirest.

For the exercise of prayer must be so accompanied by the exercise of self-mastery, that the one may revolve round the other ; else, to pray for a virtue, and not exert oneself to obtain it, would be rather tempting God than otherwise.

Fifthly. Let thy petitions be preceded, for the most part, by thanksgivings for blessings received, in this or the like form :

“O Lord, Who of Thy Goodness hast created and redeemed me, and on so many and numberless occasions, unknown to myself, hast delivered me out of the hands of my enemies, help me now, and deny me not my request, though I have been ever rebellious and ungrateful unto Thee.”

And if thou hast some especial virtue to implore, and at the same time some occasion of painful exercise in it, do not forget to thank God for the opportunity He has afforded thee, which is an instance of no small loving-kindness on His part.

Sixthly. Because prayer derives its efficacy and its power of making God propitious to our desires, from the Bounty and Mercifulness of His own Nature, and from the Merits of the Life and Passion of His Only Begotten Son, and from the promise which He has made to hearken unto us, thou wilt conclude thy petitions with one or more of the following clauses :

“Grant me this grace of Thy great Mercy, O Lord! May the Merits of Thy Son obtain for me that which I implore. Remember Thy promises, O my God, and incline Thine Ear to my prayers.”

Seventhly. Thou must continue perseveringly in prayer, because humble perseverance conquers the Unconquerable. For if the importunity and assiduity of the widow in the Gospel inclined to her request the judge laden with all iniquity, (Luke xviii.,) how should a like perseverance fail to incline to our petitions God, Who is Himself the Fulness of all Goodness ?

And if, when thou hast prayed, the Lord delay to come and hear thee, nay, if He even seem to reject

thee, still pray on, and hold fast a firm and lively confidence in His Help, for in Him there is no lack, but an infinite superabundance of all things needful for the grace we ask.

Therefore, unless there be a fault on thy part, rest secure of ever obtaining either all thy petition, or what will be more profitable to thee, or, it may be, both together.

And the more He seems to repulse thee, the more do thou humble thyself in thine own eyes, and considering thy demerits, and fixing thy thoughts steadfastly on the Mercy of God, strengthen more and more thy confidence in Him, which if thou maintain lively and entire, the more it is assailed, the more acceptable will it be to thy Lord.

After all this, give thanks to Him always, acknowledging Him to be no less Good, and Wise, and Loving, when some things are denied thee, than if they were granted thee; happen what may, remain thou ever steadfast and joyful, in humble submission to His Divine Providence.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES MENTAL PRAYER.

**MENTAL** prayer is a lifting up of the mind to God in actual or virtual supplication for what we desire.

The *actual* is, when we mentally put our petition into words, such as these, or others of a like kind.

“O Lord God, grant me this grace for Thine Honour;” or, “O Lord, I believe it to be Thy Plea-

sure and for Thy Glory, that I should ask and receive of Thee this grace ; fulfil then now Thy Divine Will in me."

And when actually assaulted by enemies, pray after this manner.

"Be ready, O my God, to help me, that I yield not to my enemies ;" or, "My God, my Refuge, the Strength of my heart, help me quickly lest I fall."

And continue thus to pray as long as the conflict continues, making all the while a manful resistance against thine adversary.

When the sharpness of the struggle is over, turn to thy Lord, and presenting before Him the enemy which has assailed thee, and thine own inability to resist him, say :

"Behold, Lord, the creature of Thy bounty, the work of Thy Hands, redeemed by Thy Blood. Behold thine enemy who strives to rob thee of it, and to devour it. To Thee, my Lord, do I fly, in Thee Alone do I trust, Who art All-powerful and Good, and Who seest my weakness, and my proneness, without Thy help, to become a willing captive. Help me then, my Hope, and the Strength of my heart !"

By *virtual* supplication I mean, lifting up the mind to God to obtain some grace, showing Him our need of it without further speech or discourse. As, when I lift up my heart to God, and there in His Presence acknowledge myself helpless, unable to shield myself from evil, or of myself to do any good thing, and inflamed with a desire to serve Him humbly and in faith, awaiting His Aid, I behold and contemplate Him the Lord.

Such an acknowledgment, inflamed with desire, or



faith towards God, is a prayer which virtually asks for what I need; and the clearer and more earnest the acknowledgment, the more burning the desire, the more lively the faith, the more effectual will be the prayer.

There is another sort of virtual prayer of a briefer kind, offered up by a mere glance of the mind to God to obtain His Aid, which glance is nothing but a silent remembrancer and entreaty for that grace for which we have before prayed.

And thou shouldest diligently learn this kind of prayer, and become familiar with its use, because, as experience will show thee, it is a weapon of inexpressible value and assistance, which thou mayest have in hand at all times and on all occasions.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

### OF PRAYER BY MEANS OF MEDITATION.

BEING desirous to pray for some space of time, half an hour, or perhaps a whole hour, or more, thou wilt add to prayer a meditation on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ, always applying His Actions to that virtue which thou desirest.

Thus, if thou desire to obtain the grace of patience, thou wilt, perhaps, take for the subject of thy meditation some points in the mystery of the Scourging.

First. How, after the command given by Pilate, our Lord was dragged amid scoffs and cries, by the ministers of wickedness, to the place appointed for His Scourging.

Secondly. How He was stripped with headlong fury, so that His most Pure Flesh was left naked and exposed.

Thirdly. How His innocent Hands were bound with hard cords and made fast to the pillar.

Fourthly. How His Body was so torn and lacerated with scourges, that His Sacred Blood flowed down to the ground.

Fifthly. How, by repeated stripes on the same place, the anguish of the Wounds already inflicted was still more aggravated.

Thus, in order to acquire the grace of patience, having proposed to thyself these, or similar subjects of meditation, thou wilt first apply thy senses to feel in the highest possible manner the acute agony and most bitter pains which, throughout His most sacred Body, and in every part of It at once, thy dear Lord endured.

Thence thou wilt pass on to His most Holy Soul, and, as far as thou canst, strive to enter into the patience and meekness with which He bore all these Agonies, which yet could not satisfy His longing desire to suffer even greater and more excruciating tortures for our benefit and His Father's Honour.

Behold Him next inflamed with an ardent desire that thou shouldest be willing to bear thy trouble, and see how He still turns to the Father, and prays for thee, that He would grant thee grace patiently to bear that cross which is then tormenting thee, and any other which may be laid upon thee.

Hence bowing thy will again and again to will to suffer all with a patient spirit, after this turn thy mind to the Father, and having first thanked Him for having, out of His pure Charity, sent His Only

**Begotten Son into the world, to bear such bitter anguish, and to intercede for thee, ask Him to give thee the grace of patience, for the merits of the Works and Intercessions of His Beloved Son.**

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

OF ANOTHER WAY OF PRAYING BY MEANS OF MEDITATION.

**THERE** is also another way in which thou mayest pray and meditate.

After thou hast well considered the Sorrows of the Lord, and meditated upon the willing Spirit with which He bore them, thou wilt pass on from the greatness of His Travail and of His Patience, to two other considerations.

The one, of His Merit.

The other, of the Glory and Satisfaction of the Eternal Father, through the perfect Obedience of His Son in His Passion.

And representing these two things to His Divine Majesty, ask (in virtue of them) the grace which thou desirest. And this thou mayest do, not only in each Mystery of our Lord's Passion, but in each particular act, whether interior or exterior, done by Him in each Mystery.

## CHAPTER XLVIII. [§ 1.]

OF MEDITATION ON CHRIST'S PASSION, IN ORDER  
TO EXCITE VARIOUS AFFECTIONS IN THE SOUL.

WHAT I have said above concerning the Lord's Passion relates to prayer and meditation by way of supplication. I now add some directions as to divers affections, which we may thereby excite within us.

Thou dost purpose (for example) to meditate on the Crucifixion. In this Mystery thou mayest dwell, among other points, upon the following.

First. How, when the Lord was inhumanly stripped on Mount Calvary by that enraged multitude, His Flesh was lacerated by the tearing off His garments, which clung to the Wounds inflicted by the scourge.

Secondly. How the crown of thorns was taken off His Head, and by being again pressed down upon It, wounded Him afresh.

Thirdly. How, with the strokes of a hammer and with nails, He was cruelly fastened to the Cross.

Fourthly. How His Sacred Limbs, which could not reach the holes made to receive the nails, were stretched by these cruel dogs so violently, that the dislocated Bones might be told one by one.

Fifthly. How, as the Lord hung upon the hard wood, supported only by the nails, the weight of His Body bearing downwards, enlarged His most Sacred Wounds, and aggravated their inexpressible agony.

Desiring then, by these or other points, to excite in thyself the affection of *love*, study by meditation upon them to pass from knowledge to deeper know-

ledge of thy Lord's infinite Love and Goodness towards thee, Who for thee was pleased to suffer so much. For the more thou dost advance in this knowledge, the more will thy love increase.

And this knowledge of the Goodness and infinite Love, shown thee by thy Lord, will easily lead thee to contrition and sorrow, that thou hast so often and so ungratefully offended thy God, Who for thine iniquities was in so many ways tortured and ill used.

To excite thyself to *hope*, consider that into this estate of extreme misery did so Mighty a Lord descend, that He might abolish sin, and deliver thee from the snares of the Devil, and the bondage of thine own especial faults, that He might propitiate His Eternal Father in thy behalf, and give thee confidence to fly to Him in all thy necessities.

*Joy* will be awakened by passing from these Sufferings to their effects, i. e., that by these, the sins of the whole world are purged away, the Father's Wrath is appeased, the prince of darkness is confounded, death is slain, and the angelic ranks again filled up.

Thou wilt be further moved to gladness by the joy thereby imparted to the most Holy Trinity, together with the Church militant and triumphant.

To excite thyself to *hatred* against thy sins, apply every point of thy meditation to this end alone, as if the Lord had suffered for this purpose only, to teach thee to hate thine evil inclinations, and especially that one which most rules thee, and is most displeasing to His Divine Goodness.

To move thee to *wonder*, consider what greater marvel can there be, than to behold the Creator of the universe, Who giveth life to all things,

persecuted unto death by His creatures; His Supreme Majesty abased and trampled upon; God's Justice condemned; His Beauty despised; the Love of the Eternal Father hated; that inward and inaccessible Light brought under the power of darkness; Blessedness and Glory Itself accounted the dishonour and scandal of mankind, and sunk into the extremest misery.

In order to sympathize with thy Suffering Lord, besides meditating upon His outward Agonies, thou must in thought penetrate into those untold, unexampled Sufferings which tortured Him inwardly. For if the former grieve thee, it were a marvel if thy heart break not with anguish at the thought of the latter.

The Soul of Christ beheld the Divine Essence as It now beholds It in Heaven, knew It to be beyond measure worthy of all honour and of all service, and on account of His unspeakable Love for It, longed that all creatures should, with all their powers, be occupied therein.

To see It then, on the contrary, so strangely outraged and dishonoured by the numberless sins and the abominable iniquities of men, pierced Him with infinite pangs of grief, which tortured Him the more in proportion to the greatness of His Love, and the intensity of His desire that all men should honour and obey so exalted a Majesty.

And as the greatness of this Love and this desire are beyond our comprehension, even so, none can ever know how heavy and bitter was the inward Sorrow of the Crucified Lord on this account.

Furthermore, as He loved all His creatures with

a Love unspeakable, so, in proportion to that Love, did He grieve beyond measure for all their sins, by which they were separating themselves from Him. He grieved for every mortal sin which had been, or which should be committed by all men who had ever lived, or ever should live upon earth. For every such sin, whensoever committed, separates the sinner's soul from the Soul of the Lord, to Which it was united by love.

A separation this more painful than the dislocation of bodily members, inasmuch as the soul being a pure spirit, and more perfect and noble than the body, is therefore more capable of suffering.

Amid all these Sufferings for His creatures, the most bitter was that which the Lord endured on account of all the sins of the damned, who, as they could never more be re-united to Him, were to suffer eternal and incomparable torments.

And if the soul, touched by these Sufferings of her Beloved Saviour, will enter still more deeply into the contemplation of them, she will find but too abundant cause for compassion, in the heavy Sorrows endured by Him, not only for sins actually committed, but also for sins never committed. For, without doubt, both the pardon of the former, and preservation from the latter, have been purchased for us by our Lord, at the price of His precious Sufferings.

Nor will other considerations, my daughter, be wanting to bring thee to sympathize in the Passion of the Crucified.

For there never was, nor ever will be, sorrow of any kind, endured by any reasonable being whatsoever, which He in His own Person did not endure.

Insults, temptation, penance, infamy, every grief and every sorrow of each one of the whole race of man, all these wrung the Soul of Christ more intensely than the souls of those who suffered them.

For all their afflictions, both small and great, of body and of mind, even to a slight headache, or prick of a needle, were perfectly seen by our most Pitiful Lord, Who of His boundless Charity was pleased to compassionate them, and engrave them on His Heart.

Again, His anguish of spirit at the sorrows of His most Holy Mother, who can express? For in every way, and in every respect, in which the Lord sorrowed and suffered, did the Holy Virgin also sorrow and suffer most bitterly, though with a sorrow less intense than His.

And these her griefs opened afresh the inward Wounds of her Blessed Son. These, like so many fiery darts of love, pierced His most loving Heart, which, by reason of all the tortures above-named, and of others, infinite in number, yet hidden from us, may be well described (as a devout soul was wont with holy simplicity to call it) "a loving hell of voluntary pains."

If thou, my daughter, consider well the cause of all this anguish, borne by our Crucified Redeemer and Lord, thou wilt find none other but sin only.

Hence it plainly follows, that the true and chief tokens of sympathy and gratitude which He requires of us, and which we are unspeakably bound to render to Him are: to mourn over our offences purely for the love of Him; to hate sin with a deadly hatred; and to fight bravely against all His enemies and our



own evil inclinations; that so putting off the old man, with his deeds, we may put on the new, and adorn our souls with evangelical virtues.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

OF THE PROFIT TO BE DERIVED FROM MEDITATION ON THE CRUCIFIED, AND ON THE IMITATION OF HIS HOLINESS.

AMONG many other lessons to be learned from this holy meditation one is, not only to sorrow over thy past sins, but also to afflict thyself for the disorderly passions still alive within thee, which have nailed thy Lord to the Cross.

Another, to ask pardon for thy sins, and grace to loathe thyself, that thou mayest never more offend Him, but in return for all His sufferings for thee, love and serve Him henceforth perfectly, which, without this holy hatred of self, thou wilt be unable to do.

The third, effectually to persecute unto death each one of thy evil inclinations, how trifling soever it may be.

The fourth, to strive with all thy might to imitate the Holiness of the Saviour, Who suffered not only to redeem us, by making atonement for our iniquities, but also to set us an example to follow His holy steps.

Here I would propose to thee a method of meditation, which may serve to this end.

Wilt thou then (for example) acquire the virtue of

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patience in order to imitate Christ thy Lord, consider the following points.

First. How the Soul of Christ Crucified acted towards God.

Secondly. How God acted towards the Soul of Christ.

Thirdly. How Christ's Soul acted towards Itself, and towards His most Holy Body.

Fourthly. How Christ acted towards us.

Fifthly. How we should act towards Christ.

First, then, consider how the Soul of Christ, intent wholly upon God, marvelled to see that infinite incomprehensible Greatness, compared with which all created things are as a mere nothing, subjected to endure on earth the most unworthy treatment, (yet still abiding immoveable in Its Glory,) and this for man, from whom It has never received aught but unfaithfulness and insults; consider how His Soul adored God, gave Him thanks, and offered Itself wholly unto Him.

Secondly. Behold attentively how God acted towards the Soul of Christ, how He willed and impelled It to endure, for our sake, buffetings, spittings, blasphemies, scourgings, thorns, and, finally, the Cross, making known His pleasure to see It loaded with every kind of pain and ignominy.

Thirdly. Pass thence to the Soul of Christ, and think how, perceiving with Its understanding, which is Light Itself, how great was this Good-pleasure of God, and with Its affection, which is Fire itself, loving the Divine Majesty with a boundless love, both for His infinite Merit, and because of Its infinite obligations unto Him, and being called by Him to suffer for love of us and for our example, contented and joy-

ful, It disposed Itself promptly to obey His most Holy Will.

And who can fathom the ardent longings which that most pure and most loving Soul had thereto?

It was, as it were, in a labyrinth of sorrows, ever seeking (yet not finding, as It would) new ways and modes of suffering. Yet did It freely give Its whole Self, and Its most innocent Flesh, as a prey to wicked men and devils, to be dealt with at their pleasure.

Fourthly. After this, look unto thy Jesus, as He turns His pitying Eyes on thee and says, "Behold, my daughter, whither thy unbridled wishes have carried Me, because thou wouldest not do a little violence to thyself. Behold, how much and how joyfully I suffer for love of thee, and to set thee a pattern of true patience. By all my Agonies I entreat thee, daughter, to bear willingly this cross, and all others which it may be My pleasure to lay upon thee, leaving thyself wholly in the hands of all the persecutors whom I shall give thee, be they ever so vile and cruelly set against thine honour and thy life. Oh! didst thou but know the consolation this will give Me! But thou mayest clearly see it in these Wounds, which I have willed to receive as costly jewels, in order to adorn with precious virtues that poor soul of thine, which is dear to Me beyond thine estimation. And if, on this account, I have reduced myself to such extremity, wherefore, beloved bride, wilt thou refuse to suffer a little in order to satisfy My Heart, and allay the anguish of these Wounds, inflicted by thine impatience, which afflicted Me so bitterly, yea, far more than the Wounds themselves?"

Fifthly. Next consider well Who it is that thus talks with thee, and thou wilt see that it is Christ

Himself, the King of Glory, Very God, and Very Man. Consider the greatness of His torments and His ignominy, which would have been unworthy of the vilest criminal. Behold thy Lord, not only calm and marvellously patient under all these outrages, but rejoicing in them as at His bridal. And as a little water does but fan the flame, so, with the increase of Agonies which to His abundant Love seemed little, did His joy in them increase, and His longing to suffer others yet greater. Reflect that thy most merciful Lord did and suffered all this, not of necessity, nor for any benefit to Himself, but (as He has told thee) out of His love for thee, and that thou mightest exercise thyself, after His pattern, in the virtue of patience. Entering then deeply into His Will concerning thee, and the satisfaction which thou wilt afford Him by exercising thyself in this virtue, make acts of burning desire to bear, not with patience only, but with joy, thy present cross, and every other, were it heavier still, in imitation of thy God, and the better to console Him. And placing before the eyes of thy mind the shame and bitterness He endured for thee, His patience and His constancy, blush to call thine even the mere shadow of patience, or thy sorrows and thy shame realities. And fear and tremble, lest perchance the least thought of unwillingness to suffer for the love of thy Lord, find even a momentary resting-place within thy heart.

My daughter, this Crucified Lord is the book I give thee to read, that from It thou mayest draw the true picture of every virtue. It is the book of Life, which not only by words instructs the understanding, but by its living example inflames the will.

The whole world is filled with books, and yet,

though put all together, cannot they teach us perfectly the way to acquire all virtues, as doth the contemplation of God Crucified.

And know, my daughter, that they who spend many hours in weeping over our Lord's Passion, and meditating on His Patience, and then, when trouble overtakes them, are as impatient as if their prayers had taught them quite a different lesson, are like soldiers of this world, who in the tents, before the hour of battle, promise themselves great things, but at the first appearance of the enemy throw down their arms and take flight. What can be more miserable and more foolish, than thus to see, as in a bright mirror, the Holiness of the Lord, to love It and admire It, and yet, when an opportunity occurs to exercise ourselves therein, wholly to forget and disregard It.

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## CHAPTER L.

### OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

Thus far, my daughter, I have (as thou hast already seen) furnished thee with four weapons which thou needest in order to overcome thine enemies, and with many directions how to use them well. There yet remains one other to offer thee, i. e. the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

For inasmuch as this Sacrament is above all other Sacraments, so is this fifth weapon superior to all the others.

The four above-named derive their value from the Merits and Grace purchased for us by the Blood of

Christ, but this weapon is His very Flesh and Blood joined to His Soul and His Divinity.

With the former we fight against our enemies in the strength of Christ; with the latter we fight against them with Christ, and Christ fights against them with us. For he who eateth the Flesh of Christ and drinketh His Blood dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him.

And seeing that this weapon, even this most Holy Sacrament, may be taken and used in two ways: i. e., sacramentally once every day, and spiritually every hour and moment; thou shouldest not neglect to take It very frequently in the second way, and at all times when thou mayest in the first.

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## CHAPTER LI.

### OF THE MANNER IN WHICH TO RECEIVE THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

WE may approach this most Divine Sacrament for divers ends, for the attainment of which there are divers things to be done, which may be divided into three periods.

Before Communion;

When we are about to Communicate;

And after Communion.

Before Communion (whatever be our object in receiving It) we must cleanse and purify ourselves, if stained with mortal sin, in the sacrament of penance, and with the whole heart's affection we must give our whole self, with all our soul, all our strength, and

all our powers, to Jesus Christ, and to His Good-pleasure, since in this most Holy Sacrament He gives us His Blood and His Flesh, with His Soul, His Divinity, and His Merits. And seeing that our gift is little, nay, nothing in comparison with His, we should desire to possess all that has ever been offered and given to Him by all His creatures, whether human or celestial, that we might present it all to His Divine Majesty.

Or wouldest thou receive It in order to vanquish and destroy within thee His enemies and thine own? Begin then on the eve of thy Communion, or earlier, to meditate on the desire of the Son of God, that in this most Holy Sacrament thou shouldest give Him a place in thine heart, that He may unite Himself to thee, and aid thee to overcome all thine evil passions.

So great and so immeasurable is this desire of our Lord, that no created intellect can comprehend it.

But to fit thyself, in some degree, to apprehend it, there are two things which thou must impress deeply on thy mind.

One is, the ineffable pleasure which the All-Gracious God takes in dwelling with us, for He calls it His delight.

The other, His hatred of sin above all things, both as an obstacle and impediment to that union of Himself with us which He so ardently desires, and also as being so utterly opposed to His Divine Perfections. For being Himself Supreme Good, Pure Light, and Infinite Beauty, He cannot but infinitely hate sin, which is nothing else but darkness, the fault and intolerable stain of our souls.

So burning indeed is this hatred of the Lord against

sin, that the whole dispensation of the Old and New Testament was ordained for its destruction, and, above all, that of the most Holy Passion of His Son, Who (as God's enlightened servants have said) would, if necessary, expose Himself anew to a thousand deaths, in order to destroy in us every fault, even the very smallest.

These considerations will enable thee to comprehend (though very imperfectly) how earnestly thy Lord desires to gain an entrance into thine heart, that He may wholly banish thence and subdue all His enemies and thine, and so wilt thou be excited to an earnest desire, on thy part, to receive Him for the same end.

Thus encouraged and inspired by the hope that thy Heavenly Captain will come under thy roof, often summon to battle the passion which thou hast undertaken to subdue, and repress it by constant and determined opposition, making acts of the contrary virtue; and this thou shouldest continue to do both in the evening and the morning before the Holy Communion.

Again, when about to receive the most Holy Sacrament, review briefly all the faults which, since thy last Communion, thou hast committed as heedlessly as though God existed not, nor had endured so much pain for thee in the Mysteries of the Cross, making more account of a base indulgence of thine own wishes than of God's Will or God's Honour; so with deep shame and a holy fear wilt thou be confounded for thine unworthiness and thine ingratitude.

But reflecting again that the immeasurable depth of thy Lord's Goodness calls to the deep of thine ingratitude and faithlessness, draw near to Him with



confidence, giving Him a spacious abode in thy heart, that He may make Himself its absolute master.

And this thou wilt do with thy whole heart, when thou hast driven thence all affection to the creature, closing it fast that none may enter into it but thy Lord only.

When thou hast communicated, retire immediately into the secret place of thy heart, and having first adored Him, then with all humility and reverence converse in spirit with thy Lord, saying:—

“Thou seest, O my Only Good, how prone I am to offend Thee, and how great a power this passion has over me, and that of myself I have no strength to free myself. Thine, then, chiefly is this fight, and from Thee Alone do I hope for victory, though I must needs do my part in the battle.”

Then turn to the Eternal Father, and offer to Him for a thank-offering, and to obtain the victory over thyself, His Blessed Son, Whom He has given thee, and Whom thou hast now within thee. Then attack this passion vigorously, looking in faith to God for the victory, Who, if on thy part thou wilt do what thou canst, will never fail thee, though He seem to delay for a while.

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## CHAPTER LII.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR COMMUNION, IN ORDER TO  
EXCITE WITHIN OURSELVES THE LOVE OF GOD.

IN order to excite thyself to the love of God, by means of this Super-celestial Sacrament, let thy

meditation on the preceding evening be upon His Love to thee.

How that Great and Almighty Lord, not content with having created thee after His Own Image and Likeness, and with having sent His only Begotten Son into the world to suffer during three and thirty years for thine iniquities, and to endure the bitterest sorrows, and the painful death of the Cross, for thy redemption, was further pleased to leave Him with thee for thy Support and Nourishment in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Consider well, my daughter, the inconceivable excellency of this Love, which renders it perfect and unparalleled in all points.

First. If we look at its duration, Our God has loved us unceasingly, and without beginning; and as He is Eternal in His Divinity, so is His Love Eternal, whereby before all worlds, He determined in His Heart to give us His Son in this marvellous way.

Rejoicing at this within thyself, say, with secret joy, "In that abyss of eternity, my littleness was then so loved and prized by the most High God, that He thought of me, and desired with love unspeakable to give me His own Son to be my Food."

Secondly. All other love, how great soever, has some boundary which it may not pass, but this Love of our Lord is alone beyond measure.

Willing, therefore, to satisfy Himself fully, He has given His own Son, in Majesty and Infinity Equal to Himself, and of the same Substance and Nature. Hence the Love is as great as the Gift, and the Gift as great as the Love, and such the greatness of both, that no intellect can conceive any thing greater.

Thirdly. Neither was God drawn to love us by any compulsion or necessity, but His intrinsic natural Goodness alone moved Him to so great and incomprehensible a love towards us.

Fourthly. Neither could any previous good work or desert of our's have induced this Mighty Lord to manifest such excess of love towards our wretchedness, but of His free Bounty alone has He given Himself wholly to us His most unworthy creatures.

Fifthly. If thou consider the purity of that love, thou wilt see, that it is not, like worldly love, mingled with aught of self-interest. For the Lord has no need of anything of our's, being, without us, most Blessed and most Glorious in Himself Alone ; but He pours forth His unspeakable Love and Bounty upon us, solely for our benefit, and not for His.

Reflecting well upon this, thou wilt say in thine heart, "How is it that so Mighty a Lord sets His Heart upon so vile a creature? What wouldest Thou, O King of Glory? What dost Thou look for from me, who am but dust? I see well, O my God, by the light of Thy burning Charity, that Thou hast but one design, which discovers to me most plainly the purity of Thy love for me. For to this end only dost Thou give me Thy Whole Self to be my Food, that I may be wholly changed into Thee ; and this, not because Thou hast any need of me, but that Thou living in me, and I in Thee, I may, by a loving union, become Thyself, and that of the vile-ness of my earthly heart there may be made with Thee, one only Divine Heart."

Then, full of joy and wonder, to see thyself so highly prized and loved by God, and understanding that by this His omnipotent Love, He seeks and

wills only to draw all thy love to Himself, withdraw first from all creatures, and from thyself also, as being a creature, and offer thyself as a whole burnt sacrifice to thy Lord, that His Love alone, and His Divine pleasure may henceforth guide thine understanding, thy memory, and thy will, and regulate all thy senses.

And then, perceiving that nothing is so powerful to produce in thee such Divine effects, as worthily to receive Him in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, to this end open thine heart to Him with the following ejaculatory and loving aspirations :

“O Super-celestial Food, when will the hour come, when with no other fire but that of Thy Love, I may wholly sacrifice myself to Thee? When, when, O uncreated Love?

O living Bread, when shall I live by Thee Alone, for Thee Alone, and to Thee Alone? When, my Life, Beauteous Life, Blessed and Eternal Life?

O celestial Manna! when shall I, loathing all other food, desire Thee Alone? feed on Thee Alone? When shall this be, O my Delight, my only Good? O my Loving and Almighty Lord, free now this wretched heart from every attachment, and from every vicious passion, adorn it with Thy Holiness, and with the pure intention of doing all things solely to please Thee, that so I may open my heart to Thee, invite Thee, and, with gentle violence, compel Thee to come in, that Thou, O Lord, mayest, without resistance, work therein all that Thou hast ever desired to effect in me.”

In such loving affections, thou mayest exercise thyself in the evening, and the morning, preparatory to Communion.

Then as the time of Communion approaches, think What it is thou art about to receive!

The Son of God, of Majesty Incomprehensible, before Whom the Heavens and all the powers therein do tremble. The Holy of Holies, the Spotless Mirror, and the Incomprehensible Purity, beside Whom no creature is clean. He, Who as a very worm, and the outcast of the people, was pleased for love of thee to be rejected, trampled upon, mocked, spit upon, and crucified, by the malice and wickedness of men.

Thou art (I say) about to receive God, in Whose Hand are the life and death of the whole universe.

Think, on the other hand, that as of thyself thou art nothing, so hast thou, by thy sin and wickedness, made thyself lower than the vilest and most impure of irrational creatures, worthy to be the sport and mockery of all the devils in hell.

That instead of being thankful for such immense and innumerable benefits, thou hast, in thy wilfulness and caprices, despised so Mighty and Loving a Lord, and trampled upon His Precious Blood.

Yet, for all this, in His enduring Love, and unchanging Goodness, He bids thee to His Divine Table, nay, at times constrains thee to come to It on pain of death. He closes not the door of His Mercy, nor turns His Divine Presence from thee, though by nature thou be leprous, lame, diseased, blind, possessed by devils, and though thou hast "gone after many lovers."

This only does He require of thee :

First. To mourn over thine offence against Him.

Secondly. Above all things to hate sin, both great and small.

Thirdly. To offer and give thyself up wholly to His Will, and His Obedience, and this with the affections always, and in act when occasion offers.

Fourthly. To hope and firmly believe that He will then pardon and cleanse thee, and preserve thee from all thine enemies.

Encouraged by this ineffable Love of the Lord, thou wilt then draw nigh to communicate with a loving and holy fear, saying,

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive Thee, because of the many and many times wherein I have grievously offended Thee, nor have I yet mourned, as I ought, over my offences against Thee.

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive Thee, for I am not perfectly cleansed from the pollution of venial sins.

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive Thee, because I have not yet given myself up sincerely to Thy Love, to Thy Will, and to Thy Obedience.

“O Lord Omnipotent, and Infinite in Goodness, by virtue of Thy Goodness, and Thy Word, make me worthy, that with this faith, O my soul’s Love, I may receive Thee.”

When thou hast communicated, shut thyself up immediately in the secret of thy heart, and apart from all created things, hold converse with thy Lord in the following, or such like form :

“O Highest King of Heaven, what has brought Thee within me, who am miserable, poor, blind, and naked ? ” And He will answer—“Love.”

And thou, in reply, wilt say, “O uncreated Love, O sweet Love, what wilt Thou from me ? ”

“Nothing,” will He answer thee, “but love.”  
“I would have no other fire to burn upon the altar

of thy heart, and in thy sacrifices, and in all thy works, but the fire of My Love, which consuming all other love, and all self-will, will be a most sweet savour unto Me.

“ This I have required of thee, and still require, because I desire to be wholly thine, and thou wholly Mine, and this will never be, till, making that entire resignation of thyself which so delights Me, thou be detached from all love of self, from self-opinion, self-will, and self-esteem.

“ I ask thee to hate thyself, that I may give thee My Love ; I ask thy heart, that it be united unto Mine, Which to this end was pierced upon the Cross ; and I ask thy whole self, that I may become wholly thine.

“ Thou seest that I am of priceless value, yet of My Goodness I value Myself but at thy value. Buy Me, then, O My beloved, by giving Me thyself.

“ I desire this of thee, sweet daughter, that thou shouldest will nothing, think nothing, understand nothing, see nothing, but Me and My Will, that in thee I may will all, think all, understand all, and see all ; so that thy nothingness, being absorbed in the depth of My Infinity, may be changed into It. So wilt thou be fully blest and happy in Me, and I wholly content in thee.”

Lastly, thou wilt offer to the Father, His Son, first, as a thank-offering, then for thine own wants, and those of all the Holy Church, of all belonging to thee, or to whom thou art in any way bound, and this offering thou wilt make in memory and in union with that which He made of Himself, when hanging all bleeding on the Cross, He offered Himself to the Father.

And in this way thou mayest likewise offer to Him all the sacrifices offered on that day throughout the Holy Catholic Church.

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## CHAPTER LIII.

### OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

THOUGH we may not receive the Lord sacramentally more than once a day, He may, nevertheless, (as I have before said) be received spiritually every hour, and every moment, and this by every creature, unless through negligence, or some other fault, this may be withdrawn from us.

And this spiritual Communion will sometimes be more beneficial to the soul, and more acceptable to God, than many sacramental Communion, which may fail to be so through the faults of the recipients.

As often then as thou shalt dispose thyself for such Communion, thou wilt find the Son of God ready, with His Own Hands, to give Himself to thee for thy spiritual Food.

By way of preparation, turn to Him with thy whole heart, and after a brief review of thy failings, mourn with Him over thine offences, and beseech Him, in all humility and faith, that He would deign to come into thy poor soul, with new grace, to heal it, and to strengthen it against the enemy.

Or again, when striving to subdue self, to mortify any one of thine appetites, or to perform some act of virtue, do all with a view to make ready thy heart for the Lord, Who is continually asking it of thee; and then turning to Him, invite Him earnestly to



come with His grace to heal thee, and deliver thee from thine enemies, that He Alone may take possession of thy heart.

Or else, calling to mind thy last Sacramental Communion, say, with a burning heart, "When, O Lord, shall I receive Thee again? When? O when?"

But if thou wouldest prepare thyself, and communicate spiritually in a more solemn manner, begin from the preceding evening to direct all thy acts of virtue, or mortification, and all other good works to this end, i.e. the spiritual reception of thy Lord.

And early in the morning, strive to inflame thy heart with a great desire to receive Him (as being an act well pleasing to Him) by a consideration of the great happiness and benefit of the soul that worthily receives the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar; for thereby lost virtue is regained, the soul recovers her former beauty, and the fruits and merits of the Passion of the Son of God are communicated to her. Consider, also, how well pleased God is, that we should receive this Sacrament, and enjoy these blessings.

The desire for It being thus enkindled within thee, turn to Him and say, "Since, Lord, I am not permitted this day to receive Thee sacramentally, vouchsafe, O Power and Goodness Increate, to pardon and cleanse me from all my faults, that I may worthily receive Thee spiritually, not now only, but every day, and every hour, and grant me new grace and strength to resist all my enemies, and specially that one, against whom, for the love of Thee, I am now waging war."

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## CHAPTER LIV.

## OF THANKSGIVING.

SINCE all the good we have, or do, is of God, and from God, we are bound to give Him thanks for all our virtuous exercises, and victories, and for all the blessings, general and particular, which we have received from His Merciful Hand.

And to do this in a fitting manner, we must consider the end for which the Lord communicates His favours to us; for, from this consideration and knowledge, we come to learn how God would be thanked.

And because in all His blessings the Lord principally designs His own Honour, and wills thereby to draw us to His love and service, first consider with thyself thus, "With what power, wisdom, and goodness has my God granted and bestowed this grace and blessing upon me!"

Then, seeing that there is nothing in thee (of thine own) which could merit any blessing, but on the contrary, nought but demerit and ingratitude, thou wilt say to thy Lord, with deep humility,

"How is it that Thou, O Lord, deignest to look upon a dead dog, bestowing so many blessings upon me. Blessed be thy Name from generation to generation."

And lastly, seeing that by His blessing He seeks to excite thee to love and serve Him, inflame thyself with love towards so loving a Lord, and with a sincere desire to serve Him in whatever way He may appoint.

And to this end, thou wilt also make a full oblation of thyself in the following manner.

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## CHAPTER LV.

### OF SELF-OBLATION.

Two things are necessary to make thy self-oblation in all points acceptable to God. One, that it be in union with the offerings which Christ made to the Father. The other, that thy will be wholly detached from all love of the creature.

First. Thou must know that the Son of God; when sojourning in this vale of tears, offered to His Heavenly Father, not Himself only, and His works, but with Himself, us also, and our works. Hence our offerings must be made in union with, and in dependence upon His.

Secondly. Consider well, before thou offer up thyself, whether thy will be bound to any earthly thing; for if it be, thou must first free thyself from all attachment; and for this purpose have recourse to God, that He, with His right Hand, may liberate thee; so that, free and loosed from any other bond, thou mayest be able to offer thyself wholly unto His Divine Majesty.

And be very watchful on this point; because, if thou offer thyself to God while bound to any creature, thou offerest not thine own, but that which is another's, seeing thou art not thine own, but the property of those creatures to whom thy will is bound; a thing most displeasing to the Lord, as being but a mockery.

Hence it is, that not only do our often oblations of ourselves unto God return to us void and fruitless, but that we afterwards fall into divers failings and sins.

We may, indeed, offer ourselves to God, while still attached to creatures, but only in order that His goodness may free us from them, to the end that we may give ourselves up wholly to His Divine Majesty, and to His service ; and this we should do frequently, and with great earnestness.

Let then thy oblation be without admixture of earthly affection, or self-regard of any kind, looking neither to earthly nor heavenly blessings, but to the mere Will and Providence of God, to Whom thou shouldest submit thyself entirely, offering up thyself as a perpetual burnt-offering, and severed from all created things, say, "Behold, my Lord and Creator, I submit each and all my desires to the disposal of Thy Will and Thine eternal Providence. Do with me as seemeth good to Thee in life and in death, and after death, as in time, so in eternity."

If thou dost this in sincerity (which will be seen when adverse things befall thee), thou wilt become a trafficker, not in earthly, but in most blessed and heavenly goods ; for thou wilt be God's, and God will be thine ; for He ever dwells with those who, forsaking themselves, and all other creatures, give themselves up as a whole burnt-offering to His Divine Majesty.

Here then, my daughter, thou seest an infallible means of overcoming all thine enemies ; for if in this oblation, thou so unite thyself to God, as to become all His, and He all thine, what power, or what enemy can ever injure thee ?

And when thou wouldest offer to Him any one of thy works, as fasts, prayers, acts of patience, or other good deeds, turn thy thoughts first to the Offering which Christ made to the Father, of His fasts, prayers, and other works, and in dependence on the worth and virtue of These, offer then thine own.

If thou wouldest offer the Works of Christ to thy Heavenly Father, in satisfaction for thine offences, thou wilt do it in the following manner.

Thou wilt take a general, and at times a particular review of thy sins ; and seeing clearly that it is impossible for thee (of thyself) to appease the wrath of God, or to satisfy His Divine Justice, thou wilt turn to the Life and Passion of His Son, meditating upon some one of His Actions ; as for example, when He fasted, prayed, suffered, and shed His Blood ; thou wilt thereby see, that, to propitiate the Father for thee, and to pay the debt of thine iniquity, He offered to Him these His Works, His Sufferings, and His Blood, saying as it were :

“Behold, O eternal Father, according to Thy Will, I make superabundant satisfaction to Thy Justice for the sins and trespasses of N . . . . May it please Thy Divine Majesty to pardon them, and to receive her into the number of thine elect.”

Then, in thine own person, offer this same Offering, and these prayers to the Father, imploring Him, through their merits, to forgive thee all thy debts.

And this thou mayest do, as thou passest not only from one Mystery to another, but even from one act of each Mystery to another ; and thou mayest use this mode of oblation not for thyself only, but for others.

## CHAPTER LVI.

## OF SENSIBLE DEVOTION AND OF DRYNESS OF SPIRIT.

**SENSIBLE devotion is produced sometimes by nature, sometimes by the devil, and sometimes by grace. By its fruits thou wilt discern whence it proceeds; for if it be not followed by amendment of life, thou hast reason to fear lest it come from the devil, or from nature; and the rather, if it be accompanied by increased satisfaction and attachment, and by some degree of self-esteem.**

**When, therefore, thou feelest thy heart softened by these spiritual delights, do not stand disputing about the source whence they come, neither do thou dwell upon them, nor suffer them to withdraw thee from the acknowledgment of thine own unworthiness, but with greater diligence and hatred of self, strive to keep thy heart free from all attachment, even of a spiritual nature, and desire God Alone and His good pleasure; for by this means the delight, be it of nature, or of the devil, will become to thee of grace.**

**Spiritual dryness may, in like manner, proceed from the three following causes.**

**First. From the devil, in order to chill our spirit, and turn it away from our spiritual enterprize to the business and pleasures of the world.**

**Secondly. From ourselves, by our faults, our earthly attachments, and negligences.**

**Thirdly. From the grace of God, and to warn us to be more diligent to forsake every attachment and occupation which leads not to God, and does not end in Him; or to teach us by experience that all our**

blessings come from Him; or to prize His gifts more highly in future, and be more humble and careful to retain them; or to unite us more closely to His Divine Majesty by an entire renunciation of self, even in spiritual enjoyments; lest our affections, being set on them, divide that heart which the Lord would have wholly for Himself; or else because, for our good, He delights in seeing us fight with our whole strength, and the help of His grace.

If then thou feel dry, enter into thyself to see through what fault thou hast been deprived of sensible devotion, and turn thine arms against it, not to recover the sensible presence of grace, but to rid thyself of that which is displeasing to God.

And if thou discover not the fault, then let thy sensible devotion be the true devotion, which is, prompt resignation to the Will of God.

Take care, however, on no account to lay aside thy spiritual exercises, but continue them with all thy might, however fruitless and insipid they may seem to thee, drinking willingly the cup of bitterness, which in this dryness is presented to thee by the loving Will of God.

And though this dryness of spirit be accompanied by such thick mental darkness that thou knowest not which way to turn, or what step to take, yet fear not, but remain steadfast and solitary on the cross, far from every earthly consolation, though offered to thee by the world and the creature.

Conceal thy sufferings from all except thy spiritual father, to whom thou wilt reveal them, not for alleviation of pain, but for instruction how to bear them according to the Will of God.

Use communions, prayers, and all other exercises, not to take thee down from the cross, but to give thee strength to exalt that cross to the greater glory of the Crucified.

And if through confusion of mind thou canst neither pray nor meditate as usual, meditate and pray in the best way thou canst.

And that which thou art unable to do with the understanding, compel thyself to do with the will and with the mouth, conversing with thyself and with the Lord; for this will produce wonderful effects, and thy heart will thus gain breath and strength.

Thou mayest then, in such a case, say, "Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank Him Which is the Help of my countenance and my God."

"Why standest thou so far off, O Lord, and hidest Thy Face in the needful time of trouble? Forsake me not utterly."

And calling to mind that sacred lesson, wherewith God, in time of trouble, inspired His beloved Sarah, the wife of Tobias, do thou, too, make use of it, and say aloud: "But whoso serveth Thee knows assuredly, that his life, if passed in trial, will be crowned; if in tribulation, will be freed; and if in chastisement, he may fly to Thy Mercy. For Thou delightest not in our destruction; for Thou makest a calm to succeed a storm, and after tears and weeping, Thou infusest joy. Be Thy Name, O God of Israel, blessed for ever!"

Thou wilt also remember thy Christ, Who in the garden, and on the Cross, was, to His great grief, for-



saken, as to all sensible consolation, by His Heavenly Father; and bearing the cross with Him, say with all thy heart, "Thy Will be done."

So will thy prayers and thy patience make the flames of thy heart's sacrifice to ascend into the Presence of God, leaving thee truly devout. True devotion being (as I have said) a lively and stedfast readiness of will to follow Christ and bear the cross, by whatever way He invites and calls us to Himself, to desire God for God, and sometimes to leave God for God.

And if many who are striving after the spiritual life, and especially women, would make *this*, and not sensible devotion, the measure of their progress, they would neither be deceived, whether by themselves or by the devil, nor would they complain uselessly, nay, ungratefully of so great a gift from the Lord; but they would give themselves up with greater fervour to serve His Divine Majesty, Who orders or permits all things for His glory and our benefit.

And here again do women deceive themselves. They avoid with fear and caution all occasions of sin; yet, when at times molested by horrible, impure, and frightful thoughts, and even by still more fearful visions, they are confounded and disheartened, and think themselves forsaken by God, and wholly removed from Him, not believing it possible for a heart filled with such imaginations to be the dwelling-place of His Holy Spirit.

Thus cast down, they are ready to despair, and leaving all their holy exercises to turn back into Egypt.

Such do not clearly understand the grace thus

vouchsafed them by the Lord, Who suffers them to be assailed by these spirits of temptation, to bring them to a knowledge of themselves, and by making them feel their own need of help, to draw them to Him.

Therefore they ungratefully murmur at that for which they should thank His infinite Goodness.

What thou shouldest do in such cases is, to consider deeply thine own perverse inclination, which, for thy good, God would have thee know, is ever disposed to most grievous sin, and that without His help thou wouldest cast thyself headlong into utter perdition.

And from this gather hope and confidence, that He is ready to help thee, since He shows thee the danger, and would draw thee nearer to Himself by prayer, and by looking unto Him; therefore, thou shouldest render Him most humble thanks.

And be assured, that such seducing spirits, and evil thoughts, are better driven away by a dexterous flight, and patient endurance of the pain, than by a too anxious resistance.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

### OF THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

FOR the examination of conscience consider three things.

The falls of the day.

Their cause.

The spirit and boldness with which thou seekest to resist them, and to acquire the opposite virtues.

With regard to the falls, thou wilt do as I have advised thee in the chapter which treats of "what we should do when we are wounded."

The cause of these falls thou must endeavour to overcome and strike to the earth.

The will to do this, and to acquire holiness, thou wilt strengthen by mistrust of self, and trust in God, by prayer, and by a number of acts opposed to sin and tending to the opposite virtue.

Be distrustful of the victories and good works thou mayest have already achieved.

Moreover, I do not advise thee to think much of them, because of the almost unavoidable peril of at least some lurking motive of pride and vain-glory.

Therefore, whatever they be, leave them all behind to the mercy of God, and consider how much more there remains for thee to do.

As to thanksgiving for the gifts and favours which the Lord has bestowed on thee in the course of the day, acknowledge Him as the Author of all good, and thank Him for having delivered thee from so many open enemies, and still more from the hidden ones, for having given thee good thoughts, and opportunities of virtuous actions, and for every other benefit which thou knowest not.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

HOW WE MUST NEEDS PERSEVERE IN THIS COMBAT,  
EVER FIGHTING, EVEN UNTO DEATH.

ONE, among many other requisites for this combat, is perseverance in the continual mortification of our

passions, which in this life never die, but, on the contrary, spring up again, hour by hour, like evil weeds.

And this is a battle, which as it ends but with life, so is there no escape from it, and he who does not engage in it, is of necessity either taken captive, or slain.

Besides, we have to deal with enemies who bear us an unceasing hatred, so that we can never hope either for peace or a truce with them, because they destroy those most cruelly who strive most to make friends of them.

Thou hast no cause, however, to fear either their number or their power; for in this battle none is a loser but by his own will; for the whole power of our enemies is in the Hands of that Captain for Whose honour we have to fight.

And not only will He preserve thee from all treachery, but He will Himself fight for thee, and, being more powerful than all thine enemies, He will give the victory into thy hands, if only thou wilt fight manfully by His side, trusting not in thyself, but in His Power and Goodness.

And if the Lord delay awhile to give thee the victory, be not disheartened, but believe assuredly (and this will also help thee to fight resolutely) that He will turn all things which may befall thee, those even which to thee may seem farthest removed from, yea, most adverse to thy success, all will He turn to thy good and profit, if thou wilt but bear thyself as a faithful and generous warrior.

Do thou then, my daughter, follow thy Heavenly Captain, Who for thee has overcome the world, and given Himself up to death; apply thyself with a strong

heart to this conflict, and to the utter destruction of all thine enemies; for if thou leave but one of them alive, he will be a beam in thine eye, and a thorn in thy side, to hinder thee in the course of so glorious a conquest.

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## CHAPTER LIX.

### HOW TO PREPARE OURSELVES AGAINST THE ENEMIES WHO ASSAIL US AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

THOUGH our whole life on earth be a continual warfare, yet the principal and most signal struggle is at the last hour of the great passage; for he who falls at that point rises no more.

That this hour then may find thee well prepared, thou must fight manfully now in this present time allotted thee; for he who fights well through life will, by the good habit already acquired, gain an easy victory at the hour of death.

Meditate also frequently, and with attentive consideration, upon death; and so, when he comes upon thee, thou wilt fear him less, and thy mind will be more free and ready for the conflict.

Worldly men fly from the thought, lest it disturb their delight in earthly things, on which they have willingly so set their affections, that the thought of quitting them gives them pain. Thus their unruly affections, instead of diminishing, gain daily strength, and the idea of separation from this life, and from so much that is dear to them, is unspeakably distressing, and often most so to those who have enjoyed them longest.

The better to assist thee in making this important preparation, imagine thyself sometimes alone and helpless in the agonies of death, and picture to thy mind the following things, which are likely to trouble thee at that moment; and then think over the remedies I shall give thee, that thou mayest make the better use of them in that last strait; for the blow which can be struck but once, should be well practised beforehand, lest we commit an error which can never be remedied.

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## CHAPTER LX.

OF FOUR ASSAULTS OF OUR ENEMIES AT THE TIME OF DEATH; AND FIRST, OF THE ASSAULT UPON OUR FAITH, AND OF THE WAY TO REPEL IT.

There are four principal and most dangerous assaults which our enemies are wont to direct against us at the time of death. These are: temptation of our faith, despair, vain-glory, and various illusions of devils, transforming themselves into angels of light.

As to the first assault; if the enemy begin to tempt thee with his false arguments, retire instantly from the understanding to the will, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan, father of lies, for I will not even listen to thee; enough for me to believe as the Holy Catholic Church believes."

And, as far as possible, shut out all speculations concerning the faith, how fair soever they may seem, looking upon them as suggestions of the devil to stir up strife.

But if not in time to turn thy thoughts resolutely

from such matters, be at least strong and stedfast in not yielding to any reason or argument from Scripture which the adversary may advance; for all will be garbled, or misapplied, or misinterpreted, though to thee it may seem good, clear, and evident.

And if the wily serpent ask thee what the Catholic Church believes, make him no answer, but perceiving his fallacy, and that he seeks to entrap thee in thy words, make an internal act of yet more lively faith; or else, in order to make him burst with rage, reply, that the holy Catholic Church believes the truth; and if the evil one ask again "what is truth?" answer, "Even that which she believes."

Above all things, fix thy mind intently on the Crucified, saying, "My God, my Creator, and my Saviour, help me speedily, go not from me, that I swerve not from the truth of Thy holy Catholic faith; but grant, that as in this faith, by Thy grace, I was born, so in it, to Thy glory, I may end this mortal life."

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## CHAPTER LXI.

### OF THE ASSAULT OF DESPAIR, AND ITS REMEDY.

THE second assault by which the perverse devil attempts our utter overthrow, is the terror which he infuses into our minds at the remembrance of our sins, in order to make us cast ourselves down into the pit of despair.

In this danger, keep in mind this certain rule, that the memory of thy sins is the effect of grace, and tends to salvation, when it brings forth humility,

sorrow for having offended God, and confidence in His Mercy. When, on the other hand, such thoughts disquiet thee, and make thee fearful, and faint-hearted, though they may seem so like truth, as to make thee believe thyself condemned, and thy day of salvation past, then know that they come from the deceiver ; humble thyself the more, and trust the more in God, so shalt thou vanquish the enemy with his own weapons, and glorify the Lord.

Mourn indeed over thine offence against God, whenever it recurs to thy memory ; but nevertheless implore forgiveness, with trust in His Passion.

And I must say farther, should God Himself seem to tell thee thou art not of His sheep, still, on no account, let go thy confidence in Him, but say to Him with all humility, "Thou hast indeed reason, O Lord, to condemn me in my sins, but I have greater reason to hope in Thy Mercy for pardon. Save therefore, I beseech Thee, this Thy miserable creature, condemned indeed by her own sinfulness, but redeemed by the price of Thy Blood. I commit myself wholly into Thy Hands, O my Redeemer, that Thou mayest save me to Thy glory, trusting fully in Thine infinite compassion. Do with me whatsoever pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my only Lord ; yea, though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee."

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## CHAPTER LXII.

### OF THE ASSAULT OF VAIN-GLORY.

THE third assault is that of vain-glory and presumption. There thou must be on thy guard against



suffering thyself to be beguiled, on any pretence whatsoever, into any, the slightest complacency in thyself, or in thy works. Let thy complacency be in the Lord Alone, in His mercy, and in the works of His Life and Passion.

Abase thyself more and more in thine own sight, even to thy latest breath, and should any good work which thou hast done be brought to thy memory, acknowledge God Alone for its Author. Fly to Him for succour, yet expect it not for thy merits, how many and how great soever be the victories thou hast achieved. Ever stand in holy fear, confessing sincerely that all thy labours would be vain, did not thy God gather thee under the shadow of His wings, in Whose protection alone thou shalt put thy trust.

If thou follow this advice, thine enemies shall never have power to prevail against thee ; and so will the road be open by which thou mayest pass joyfully into the Heavenly Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

### OF THE ASSAULT OF ILLUSIONS AND FALSE APPEARANCES AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

IF our obstinate foe, who is never weary of troubling us, assail thee by false appearances, transforming himself into an angel of light, nevertheless, stand firm and stedfast in the acknowledgment of thine own nothingness, and say boldly to him, "Return, wretched one, into thy darkness ; for I am unworthy of visions, nor do I need anything but the Mercy of my Saviour."

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And even though the visions seem to bear many evident tokens that they come from Heaven, still refuse them, and drive them as far from thee as thou canst. Fear not lest this resistance, founded on thine unworthiness, should displease the Lord; for if the matter be from Him, He knows well how to make it clear, and thou wilt be no loser; for He who giveth grace to the humble, doth not withdraw it because of acts which spring from humility.

These weapons are such as the enemy most commonly uses against us at this last step. He tempts each man according to the particular inclinations to which he knows him to be most subject. Therefore, before the hour of the great conflict approaches, we should arm ourselves securely, and struggle valiantly against our most violent passions, and those which have the greatest mastery over us, that the victory may be easier in that hour which snatches from us all future time for preparation or for fighting.

**SUPPLEMENT**  
**TO**  
**THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT.**

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**“ Fight against them until they be consumed.”**

1 SAM. XV. 18.

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**CHAPTER I.**

**WHAT CONSTITUTES CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.**

**THAT** thou weary not thyself in vain in spiritual exercises, O devout soul, running thou knowest not whither, as many have done, thou hast first to learn wherein consists Christian perfection.

Christian perfection is nothing else but a full observance of the precepts and laws of God, neither turning back, nor declining to the right hand or to the left; and this with a single view to please Him. “ For this is the whole duty of man.”

So that the whole scope of the life of the Christian who aims at perfection, must be a studying to acquire more and more, day by day, the habit of forgetting self, and unaccustoming himself to do his own will, that he may do all things as moved thereto by the sole Will of God, and with a view to please and honour Him Alone.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOW TO FIGHT IN ORDER TO ATTAIN TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

THE great design we have in view has been expressed in few words; but to take it in hand, and put it in execution, "this is the work, this is the difficulty." For as by the sin of our first parents, and our own evil habits, there is within us a law contrary to the law of God, we must fight against ourselves, and also against the world and the devil, the moving and exciting causes of our conflicts.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OF THREE THINGS NECESSARY TO THE YOUNG SOLDIER OF CHRIST.

HAVING then declared war, young soldier of Christ, thou hast need of three things; a heart strong and resolute for the combat, weapons, and skill in using them.

Thou wilt gain resolution for the conflict by frequently considering that the life of man upon earth is a warfare; and that the law of this conflict is, that he who fights not as he should, shall assuredly die eternally.

Greatness of soul will be gained, first by mistrust of self, and then by firm trust in God, and an assurance that He is within thee to deliver thee from all danger.

Whenever, then, thou art assailed by enemies, hold this for certain, that as often as, distrusting thy own strength and wisdom, thou dost throw thyself in full trust on the Power, the Wisdom, and Goodness of God, the issue of the combat will be victory.

The weapons are resistance and violence.

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## CHAPTER IV.

OF RESISTANCE AND VIOLENCE, AND THE ART OF USING THEM.

RESISTANCE and violence, though heavy and painful weapons, are nevertheless necessary, and win the victory.

They are to be used in the following manner. When, because thou hast neither willed nor done the Will of God, thine own corrupt will and evil habits are buffeting thee, thou must resist them, saying, "Yes, yes, I will do it."

Thou wilt offer the same resistance when thou art tempted by desires arising from bad habits and a corrupt will, and say, "No, no, I will always, by God's help, do His Will. Oh! my God, help me speedily, lest this desire, which by Thy grace I now have to do Thy Will, be stifled in time to come by my old and corrupt will."

And if thou find resistance painful, and thy will very weak, thou must use all manner of violence with thyself, remembering that here "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence," and that "the violent," against themselves and their own passions, "take it by force."

And if thy heart be wrung with the exceeding pain

and violence of the struggle, go in spirit to Christ in the garden, and uniting thine agony to His, beseech Him, by the virtue of His Agony, to give thee the victory over thyself, that so with thy whole heart thou mayest say to thy Heavenly Father, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt. Thy Will be done."

Thou wilt then exercise thyself over and over again in bending thy will to the Will of God, willing as He wills thee to will. Study to perform every act with as great intensity of will and purity of heart, as if in it alone consisted all perfection, and the whole delight and honour of God. And in like manner thou wilt afterwards perform the second, third, fourth, and all other acts.

Furthermore, remembering at times thy having transgressed some precept, mourn over the transgression, and summon up greater energy of soul to obey God in the precept which is then before thee, and in all others as occasion offers.

And here I would remind thee, (in order that thou neglect not any opportunity of obeying God, how trifling soever,) that if thou wilt be obedient to Him in little things, He will give thee new grace henceforth to obey Him easily in greater ones.

Accustom thyself also, when any Divine precept occurs to thy mind, first to adore God, and then to beseech Him that, when the occasion comes, He will give thee aid to obey Him.

## CHAPTER V.

THAT WE MUST CONTINUALLY WATCH OVER OUR WILL, IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THE PASSION TO WHICH IT INCLINES.

ENTER into thyself as narrowly as thou canst, that thou mayest discover to which of thy passions thy will is most frequently inclined; for by it, more than by the others, is it wont to be seduced and enslaved.

For as the human will is seldom free from the presence of some one of our passions, it necessarily loves or hates, desires or avoids, is glad or sorry, hopes or despairs, fears or is either bold or angry.

If thou find it then to be moved, not according to the Will of God, but by its own love of self, endeavour to turn it from the love of self to the love of God, and to the observance of His statutes and His Holy law.

And this thou must do, not only with reference to the strong passions which lead to mortal sin, but to those also which are the occasion of venial transgressions; for these, if voluntary, though they move lightly, and tread softly, keep us still weak and destitute of virtue, and in imminent peril of falling into mortal sin.

## CHAPTER VI.

HOW BY REMOVING THE FIRST PASSION OF THE SOUL, WHICH IS LOVE OF THE CREATURE AND OF SELF, AND GIVING IT TO GOD, ALL THE OTHERS WILL CONTINUE WELL ORDERED AND REGULATED.

IN order to free thy will speedily and orderly from unruly passions, thou must first set thyself wholly to subdue and regulate the first passion, which is love; for if this be once brought under rule, all the others follow it step by step, since all spring from love, and thence derive their root and life. And this you will plainly perceive as we proceed; for what a man loves, that does he desire, and in that does he delight, but he hates, shuns, and is grieved by that which injures the object of his love, or impedes his enjoyment of it; what he loves, for that only does he hope.

And when the difficulty of obtaining what we love seems insuperable and invincible, then it is that we despair.

In like manner fear, courage, or anger are directed only against that which injures the object of our love, or hinders us from obtaining it.

The way to subdue and regulate this first passion is, to consider the qualities of the object it loves and to which it is attached, and see what is its aim in this attachment and love. And if thou discover in it beautiful, delightful, and useful qualities, thou mayest say often to thyself, "And what can exceed the Beauty and Goodness of God, Who is the sole Fountain of all goodness and perfection?"



“And what aim can be imagined more useful and delightful than to love God? for by loving Him a man is transformed into Him, rejoicing and delighting in Him Alone.”

Moreover, the heart of man belongs to God, because God Himself created and then redeemed it, and daily, by new blessings, asks for it, saying, “My son, give me thy heart.”

So that the heart of man belonging wholly to God, (for many reasons to be named hereafter,) and being all too little to discharge its obligations to Him, we should be most jealous over it, that it love nought but God Alone, and those things which please God, and this in the degree and manner most pleasing to Him.

We must exercise the like jealousy over the passion of hatred, that we may hate nothing but sin, or that which leads to sin. For these two passions of love and hatred are the foundation of the fabric of Christian perfection.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THAT THE HUMAN WILL STANDS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE.

OUR impassioned will is (as experience too well shows) very weak in resisting and subduing its passions, in subjecting them to God, and to His obedience. For, even when willing and resolved to mortify itself; yet is it too often stifled by its passions, all its good purposes and resolves effaced, and itself falls an easy

prey to them. It needs then help and assistance, not only in the hours of trial, but beforehand; that so, being strengthened against itself, it may conquer and free itself from the bondage of its passions, yielding itself up wholly to God and to His good pleasure.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW THE WILL OF MAN IS GREATLY ASSISTED BY VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

SEEING that our passions are much excited and strengthened by the world and the things of the world, when its greatness, riches, and pleasures are presented before us, it necessarily follows, that if the world and all belonging to it be trampled under foot, the will of man must turn elsewhere for breath, for it cannot exist without some object to love and delight in.

The way to subdue the world is, to consider attentively the *real* nature of its gifts and promises.

And lest we should herein go astray, blinded it may be by some passion, we will take for our consideration and rule the words of Solomon, the wisest of men, and well experienced in all, "Vanity of vanities," saith he, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

This truth is proved every day; for the heart of man desires to satisfy itself, and yet if it had all that it desires would it still remain unsatisfied; nay, it would be tormented with a greater craving, and this

because, in feeding upon the things of the world, it feeds upon dreams and shadows, vanity and lies, things which afford no nourishment.

The promises of the world are all false and full of deceit. It promises one thing, and gives another. It promises happiness, and gives disquietude. In most cases it promises, and gives not. It gives, and speedily takes away; or if it take not away quickly, it does but the more keenly afflict its impassioned lovers, who have their desires placed in the mire. To them it may be said, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame, and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?"

But even allowing, to a certain extent, that the seeming blessings of this world are real blessings; what will they say of the speed wherewith the life of men passeth from them? Where is all the happiness, and the pride, and the greatness of princes, kings, and emperors? It is even passed away.

The way then to overcome the world, so that thou mayest loathe it, and it thee, or rather, may be crucified unto thee, and thou unto it, is, to consider well, first with thine understanding, and then with thy will, the vanities and falsehood of the world, and this before thy will be set upon it; that so both the understanding and the will being free, thou mayest easily despise it, and mayest say to every creature that comes before thee, "Art thou a creature? away, away with all attachment unto thee, for in the creature I would seek only the Creator, and spiritual, not earthly, affection.

"I will and desire to love not thyself, but Him Who gives thee life and virtue."

## CHAPTER IX.

## OF THE SECOND HELP TO THE WILL.

THE second way to help the human will is, to drive away the prince of darkness, as the author of every disorderly kindling of our passions.

We drive out and subdue this enemy as often as we conquer and subdue self in its disorderly lusts and desires.

If, then, thou wouldest make the devil fly from thee, resist thy passions ; for this is the resistance which St. James would have thee offer him.

And here it is to be noted, that the devil sometimes so assails us by enkindling passions and carnal desires, that we seem almost compelled to yield to him. But there is no cause for fear. Only resist him in the full assurance that God is with thee and will not suffer thee to be caught in the snare.

Resist, I say ; for if thou persevere, thou wilt assuredly gain the victory.

I said, " if thou persevere ; " for it is not enough to resist once, twice, or thrice, but every time he tempts thee. For it is the devil's custom to attempt to-morrow what he has failed in to-day ; and next week what he could not attain to in this ; and so he goes on with much patience from time to time, one while with fury, one while with cunning, till he gain his end.

Therefore be ever resolute, ever armed ; trust not to the victories thou mayest have already gained, how many soever they be, seeing that man's life is a continual warfare, and the victory depends not on the success of to-day or to-morrow, but on the end.

And if this resistance be painful to thee, know that it is far more so to thine adversary. Hence for thy consolation thou mayest say to him, "Go, and endure suffering, infernal spirit, but, seeing that thou dost suffer through wickedness, and I, that I offend not my Lord, thy present suffering shall be eternal, and mine, by the grace of God, shall be exchanged for everlasting peace."

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## CHAPTER X.

### OF THE TEMPTATIONS OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE.

I HAVE spoken to thee, in the preceding chapter, of the temptations into which the devil is wont to lead us, by means of the grandeur, riches, and pleasures of the world. I will now speak of the temptations of spiritual pride, self-complacency, and vain-glory, which are so much the more perilous and to be feared, as they are less obvious, and more inimical to God.

Oh ! how many noble soldiers and great servants of God, after many many years of victory, have, through this pride, been laid low, and made servants of Lucifer.

The way to escape this tremendous blow and hidden snare, is to fear always, and to perform good works with fear and trembling, lest some hidden worm of pride and self-love spoil them and make them hateful to God. Therefore, humbling thyself in the performance of these, strive continually to do them better, as though thou hadst hitherto done nothing good. And even if we think (which we

never ought to do) that we have done all things well, we must still say with our whole heart, "We are unprofitable servants."

And above all, we must turn often to Christ, that He may free us from all pride, and teach us and help us to be humble of heart; for true humility is the foundation of all virtues, ever increasing and accompanying them, so that they be not lost, but increased and strengthened.

Having spoken at length on the subject of humility in the "Spiritual Combat," I will say no more at present.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### OF THE THIRD HELP TO THE HUMAN WILL.

THE third means by which we must most frequently aid our will, is prayer. Accustom thyself as soon as thou art assailed, to turn to God, saying, "O God, make speed to save me: O Lord, make haste to help me."

Let thy combat then be accompanied by prayer, by resistance in God's presence, ever clad with distrust of self, and trust in God; thus fighting, and thus armed, thou mayest look for certain victory.

What will not prayer subdue and conquer? What will not resistance overcome, accompanied by distrust of self, and trust in God? And in what battle can he be overcome, who stands in the Presence of God with an earnest resolve to please Him?

## CHAPTER XII.

**HOW A MAN MAY HABITUALLY, AND AS OFTEN AS HE WILL, PLACE HIMSELF IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.**

**IN** order to accustom thyself to feel God present with thee whensoever thou wilt, endeavour to call often to mind, that God is ever secretly present with thee, that He beholds thee, and considers all thy thoughts and works.

Or again, that the creatures which thou beholdest are like so many bars, through which the hidden God beholds thee, and say sometimes, "Ask, and ye shall receive. For whoso asketh, receiveth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Thou mayest also make God present to thee by meditating on His creatures. Passing by their corporeal substance, lift up thy thoughts to God, Who gives them their power of motion and of action.

When thou wouldest then implore help from God in this thy warfare, or in any employment, place thyself in His Presence, in one of the above-named ways, then pray and beseech Him to help and succour thee.

And here learn, O devout soul, that if thou wilt make thyself familiar with the Presence of God, thou wilt gain innumerable victories and endless treasures. Thou wilt learn, also, to keep thyself free from impulses, thoughts, words, and works, which beseeem not the Presence of God, and the Life of His Son.

And the very Presence of God will give thee strength to abide in His Presence.

For if, from the presence and nearness of natural agents, which are of a limited and finite virtue, we gain somewhat of their virtue and qualities, what shall we say of the Presence of God, Whose Virtue is infinite, and unutterably communicable?

Beside the manner of prayer above described, "O God, make speed to save me: O Lord, make haste to help me:" which suits every need, thou mayest also use prayers of a more special nature. Thus, if desirous to know and do the Will of God, thy prayer shall be one of the following, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Lead me, O Lord, in the path of Thy commandments. O that my ways were made so direct that I might keep Thy statutes."

And if thou wouldst ask of God all that can be asked of Him, and what He most wills we should ask of Him, use the Lord's Prayer, which should be said with the whole affection of the heart, and with all possible attention.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### SOME FARTHER ADVICE CONCERNING PRAYER.

I WOULD first advise thee that the prayers (I speak not here of meditation, which shall be treated of presently) should be short, (as in the example just given,) but frequent, full of longing, and of steadfast faith that God is ready to help thee, if not in thine own way and at thine own time, yet with more effectual aid, and at a more suitable season.



Secondly, let thy prayers be always accompanied, at one time actually, at another virtually, by one of the following little clauses :

“ Of Thy Goodness. According to Thy promises. To Thine Honour. In the Name of Thy Beloved Son. By virtue of His Passion.”

Thirdly, Let them be occasionally accompanied by ejaculatory prayers, as “ Grant me Thy love, O Lord, in the Name of Thy dear Son,” and “ When, O Lord, shall I obtain it? When?”

Thou mayest do the like after each separate petition in the Lord's Prayer, or after all; as: “ Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. But when, O Heavenly Father, shall Thy Name be known, honoured, and glorified by all the world? When, my God? When?” And so after the other petitions.

Fourthly. When imploring virtues and graces, it were well to consider frequently the value of the virtue and thy great need of it, the Greatness of God, and His Goodness, and the deserts of the suppliant. Thus thou wilt pray with stronger desire and affection, with greater confidence and reverence, and with greater humility.

Lastly. Thou shouldst reflect upon the object of thy petition, that it be to please God and for His Honour.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### OF ANOTHER MODE OF PRAYER.

ANOTHER most perfect mode of prayer is, to place thyself silently in the Presence of God, breathing

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from time to time sighs unto Him, turning thine eyes to Him with a heart longing to please Him, and with a quick and burning desire that He would help thee to love, honour, and serve Him sincerely.

Or else, simply desiring that He would grant thee the grace thou didst ask for in thy former petitions.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### OF THE FOURTH HELP TO THE HUMAN WILL.

THE fourth help to our will is Divine Love, by which it is so assisted and strengthened, that there is nothing it cannot do, no passion or temptation it cannot overcome.

The way to obtain this is, continually asking it of God, and meditating upon those points which are most apt (by the grace of God) to enkindle it within our earthly human hearts. Such are the following.

Who God is. What, and how great the Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Beauty of God. What God has done for man; and what, if needful, He would further do for him. In what spirit He did it. What He does daily for man. And what He will do for him in the next life, if in this life man obey His precepts with a pure mind and single purpose to please Him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## OF MEDITATION ON THE BEING OF A GOD.

HE who hath perfect knowledge of Himself, did Himself reveal what He is, when He answered, saying, "I Am that I Am."

And this which is here said of God, may not be attributed to any creature whatsoever, neither to Princes, Kings, nor Emperors, neither to Angels, nor to the whole united world; because all these have a being dependant upon God, and are in themselves absolutely nothing.

And hence we perceive how vain is that man who loves creatures, and attaches himself to them, not in them loving the Creator, and the creatures only in accordance with the will of the Same Lord.

That man is vain, I say, because he loves vanities. He is vain, because he thinks to satisfy himself with things which have no being in themselves. He is vain, because he toils for the possession of things which, when possessed, rob and slay.

If then, thou wouldest love aright, love God, Who fills and satisfies the soul.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## OF MEDITATION ON THE POWER OF GOD.

WE know that, if not one power only, but all worldly powers together, were desirous to erect not

kingdoms or cities, but a mere palace, they would require various materials, various workmen, and a long space of time, nor would they, after all, be able to rear an edifice entirely to their mind.

But God, by His Power, in an instant, out of nothing, created the whole universe; and with the same ease, could create many more, destroy them, and reduce them to nothing.

The more deeply we meditate, or shall hereafter meditate, on this one point, the more shall we discover therein new wonders and new incentives to love so mighty a Lord,

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### OF MEDITATION ON THE WISDOM OF GOD.

THE Wisdom of God is too high and unsearchable for any created being to comprehend.

Yet to attain unto some knowledge of it, cast thine eyes upon the glory of Heaven, upon the loveliness of the earth, and of the whole universe; for thou wilt find therein nothing but the incomprehensible Wisdom of the Divine Architect.

Reflect upon the life of man, and the various accidents incident to it, for there is nothing so disordered that is not, in the sight of God, inscrutable wisdom.

Meditate on the Mysteries of Redemption, for thou wilt find them to be full of the most exalted wisdom. "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

## OF MEDITATION ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

**THE** Goodness of God, like all His other infinite Perfections, is in itself incomprehensible ; but in its outward manifestations it is such, and so great, that there is nothing in the world wherein it is not to be found.

Creation is of the Goodness of God. Providence is of the Goodness of God. In Redemption, we perceive how infinite and ineffable is His Goodness, in that He has here given us His Only Begotten Son to be our ransom, and also to be our daily Food in the Sacrament of the Altar.

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## CHAPTER XX.

## OF MEDITATION ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD.

**OF** the Beauty of God, suffice it to say, that it is such and so great, that contemplating Himself unchangeably from eternity, God remains in His infinite Capacity incomprehensibly satisfied and blessed.

Know then, O man, the dignity to which, by the Goodness of God, thou art called ; and be no longer so dull of heart as to despise that Goodness, giving thy love to vanity, lies, and shadows.

God invites thee to love His Wisdom, His Goodness, and His Power, to delight thyself in His Beauty, and to enter into His Joy ; and wilt thou

turn a deaf ear? Think, O think upon thy ways, lest the hour overtake thee wherein repentance shall be unavailing.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR MAN, AND WITH WHAT SPIRIT, AND WHAT HE WOULD FURTHER DO FOR HIM, IF NEEDFUL.

WHAT God has done *to* man, and *for* man, may be known by meditating on Creation and Redemption.

But the spirit in which He created him and wrought out his salvation surpasses infinity.

Infinite was the Price of man's Redemption, but yet more infinite the spirit in which it was paid; for had it been necessary, He would willingly have suffered more, and have died many deaths.

If then in return for thy Redemption, thou owest thy whole self over and over again, what owest thou not to the love of God towards thee, which surpasses and exceeds the Ransom itself!

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## CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT GOD DOES FOR MAN DAILY.

THERE is not a day nor a moment, in which man receives not new blessings from God, for He creates him each day and moment, in that He preserves him in being. Each moment does God minister to him

through His creatures, the heaven, the air, the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein.

Each day does He give him His grace, calling him from evil to good, guarding him from sin, and if he have sinned, assisting him that he sin no more. He waits for him; He invites him to repentance; and when he comes to Him, is more ready to forgive him than man to desire forgiveness. Each day does He send him His Son, with all the treasures of the Mystery of the Cross, making Him ever present with him in the Sacrament of the Altar.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

OF GOD'S GOODNESS TO THE SINNER, IN BEARING WITH HIM AND AWAITING HIS RETURN.

To understand how great is God's Goodness, as shewn in His long-suffering towards the sinner, consider first that as His love of holiness is unspeakable, so, on the other hand, is His hatred of sin infinite.

How great then is His Goodness in upholding the sinner, who commits so many sins in the sight of His Purity and Majesty, not once, nor twice, nor thrice, but over and over again.

"I see clearly, O Lord, (may the sinner say) that when I sinned Thou didst speak thus to my heart; Let us try which of the two will conquer, thou in offending Me, or I in forgiving thee."

This point, if well considered, will, I think, by God's grace, so kindle the sinner's heart as to make him turn speedily to God.

But if it fail, then will he have reason greatly to fear God's high and inscrutable Judgment, whence issue oftentimes most sudden, tremendous, and immediate strokes of vengeance.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT GOD WILL DO IN THE LIFE TO COME, NOT FOR HIM ONLY WHO HAS ALWAYS SERVED HIM, BUT FOR THE CONVERTED SINNER.

THE favours and blessedness received from God in the heavenly country, are such, and so great, that here they cannot be conceived, nor can we clearly and fully desire them.

Who shall ever be able to conceive what it is for man to sit down at the Table of God, while He ministers unto him, and feeds him with His Own Blessedness?

Who can conceive what it is for the souls of the blessed to enter into the joy of their Lord?

And who can ever understand the love and honour shewn by God to the citizens of the Heavenly City, of which St. Thomas speaks in his *Opusculum* 63, "Almighty God subjects Himself to each of His Angels, and to holy souls, as though He were the hired servant of each, and each of them were His God."

O Lord! my God! Whoso meditates often and deeply on Thy dealings with Thy creatures, finds Thee so inebriated with love, that Thine own blessedness



seems to consist in loving them, in doing them good, and feeding them on Thyself.

O Lord! do Thou so impress this consideration upon our hearts, that we may love Thee, and by loving Thee, become one with Thee, through a loving union!

O heart of man! whither runnest thou? after a shadow? after the wind? after nothing? leaving that which is All in All! Almighty Power! Consummate Wisdom! Ineffable Goodness! Uncreated Beauty! Supreme Good! Boundless Ocean of all Perfection! He runs after thee, calling thee to Himself with so many strong cryings, and new blessings in addition to those already received.

Knowest thou the source of this thy great misery? Thou prayest not; thou meditatest not. Being therefore without light, and without heat, it is no marvel that thou canst not cast away the works of darkness.

Enter now, O soul! enter, O lukewarm religious, into this school of meditation and prayer; for in it thou wilt learn by experience, that the true study of the Christian and the Religious, is to learn to deny his own will, that he may do the Will of God, and to hate himself, that he may love God.

And that without this, all other studies (be they of all the sciences together) are but the fuel of pride and presumption, and the more they enlighten the understanding, the more do they darken the will, to the destruction of the souls of those who acquire them.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## OF THE FIFTH HELP TO THE HUMAN WILL.

**HATRED** of self is a needful help to our will, for without it we shall never obtain the aid of Divine Love, the Source of all good.

The way to acquire it is, first to ask it of God, and then to meditate on the many evils which are and have been brought upon man by love of self.

Every evil, both in heaven and earth, has arisen from this love of self.

Such is its malignant nature, that could it possibly find an entrance into Heaven, the Heavenly Jerusalem would be changed at once into a Babylon. Consider then what this pestilence works in a human breast, and in this present life.

Take love of self out of the world, and hell would instantly close its gates.

Who then will be so cruel to himself as to meditate thus on the essence, quality, and effects of self-love, and not abhor and detest it ?

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## HOW THE LOVE OF SELF MAY BE DISCERNED.

**THAT** thou mayest know how wide and extensive is the kingdom of self-love within thee, examine frequently by which of the passions of the soul thy will is chiefly ruled, for thou wilt not find it alone.

Finding then that it loves or desires, is glad or sorrowful, next consider well whether the object that is loved or desired be holy, and in accordance with the laws of God. And so of joy or sorrow, whether they be produced by such things as God would have us to be glad or sorry for; or whether all springs from the world, and from attachment to creatures, in that it lingers, busying itself with them, not of necessity, or as far as the occasion calls for, and as God willeth.

If this be so, it is plain that self-love sways thy will, and is its moving spring.

But if thy will be busied and occupied with things good in themselves, and in accordance with the Will of God, then thou must examine whether it be influenced thereto by the Will of God, or by some caprice or liking of its own; for a man may oftentimes be moved by I know not what caprice or liking, to give himself up to many good works, such as prayers, fastings, communions, and other holy exercises.

This may be proved in two ways. First. If thy will does not apply itself, as occasion offers, to all good works indifferently. And secondly. If, when crossed by impediments, it laments, and is troubled, and disquieted; or if, when successful, it is filled with self-complacency or self-gratulation.

But if the will be moved by God, besides what has been said above, thou must further consider to what end and purpose its operations are mostly directed. For if the end be simply to please God, it is well, yet not so that a man may therefore feel secure; so subtle a thing is love of self, and so prone to lurk in all good works and religious exercises.

When this most cruel monster, self-love, shows itself openly, it must be persecuted unto death with all

abhorrence, and that in small as well as in great matters.

Be ever suspicious of its hidden presence. Humble thyself therefore after every good work, smiting upon thy breast, and beseeching God to forgive thee, and to preserve thee from love of self.

It will be well therefore early in the morning to turn to the Lord, and declare to Him thy intention never to offend Him, and that especially in the ensuing day; but in all things to do His Divine Will, and this in order to please Him. To this end earnestly beseech God to assist thee at all times, and to uphold thee with His Hand, that thou mayest know and do all such things as please Him, and in the way most pleasing to Him.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### OF THE SIXTH HELP; AND, FIRST, OF SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION<sup>1</sup>.

THE sixth help to the human will is the Holy Communion, and [when it may be had] confession. For the grace of God being the chief and necessary help to our will, to enable it to eschew evil and do good, it follows, that all things by which increase of grace is acquired, are helps to the will.

In order that thou mayest receive a large increase of grace in Communion, thou hast need of the holiest dispositions; and, as we cannot of ourselves have

<sup>1</sup> In the original, "the hearing of Mass," and "on Sacramental Communion" are treated of in separate chapters; they have here been interwoven, because with us communicants are so seldom present at the Holy Communion without themselves receiving.—ED.

such as we ought to have, the following prayer should be said with great devotion.

“O Lord, we beseech, visit and cleanse our consciences, that when Thy Son, Jesus Christ, cometh unto us, He may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself, Who with Thee, &c.”

But that we fail not, on our own part, to do something in conjunction with the Divine help, thy preparation will be to consider, first—

To what end Christ instituted the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. And finding that it was in order that we should remember the love which He manifested towards us in the manifold mysteries<sup>1</sup> of the Cross; consider farther, wherefore He wills this remembrance.

And His Will being, that we should love and obey Him, our best preparation will be a desire and burning wish for this love and obedience, grieving that in time past we have not loved, but offended Him.

With this burning desire and wish to love Him, we must prepare ourselves until the time of Communion.

At the time of the Holy Communion itself, strive to enkindle in thyself an earnest desire, that as the Son of God came from Heayen, and was born in the world, in order to kindle the fire of His love upon this our earth, so, by His power, He would deign to come and be born in the secret chamber of thy heart, that thou mayest think of nothing throughout thy whole life, but how to please Him always, and for ever.

<sup>1</sup> “Ministerj,” perhaps in reference to St. MATT. xx. 28, or for “misterj.”

Next, while the Priest is saying the prayers, do thou, O fainting soul, with burning desire, implore the same blessings with him.

When he begins the Epistle and Gospel, pray mentally to God for understanding and virtue to know their meaning, and to observe it all.

In the second part, from the Offertory to the Communion, put away from thee all love or thought of creatures and of self, and offer up thyself wholly unto God, and to all His good pleasure.

At the Consecration.

Contemplating Him hidden under these accidents of bread and wine, return Him loving thanks, that He deigns thus to come to us with the precious fruits of the Tree of His Cross; and with the same Oblation, and to the same ends, that He made of Himself to His Heavenly Father, when He hung nailed to the Cross, do thou also offer Him unto the Same Father.

When, thyself, about to communicate, enliven thy faith to see under the accidents of the consecrated elements, the true Lamb of God that taketh away sins. Adore Him with profound reverence; open thy heart to Him by closing it to all creatures, in order that the Lord may kindle therein the fire of His Love; beseech Him to remove from thy heart every secret sin, yea all sins whatsoever; and then receive Him in the hope that He will give thee His Love.

When thou hast received Him, and brought Him into thy heart, ask Him again and again to give thee His Love, and all other needful graces, and this in order to please Him.

Lastly, offer Him to thy Heavenly Father, as a Sacrifice of praise for the Boundless Love which He

has shewn us in this and all the other blessings of Redemption, and as a means of obtaining His Love for thyself, and for the living and the dead.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OF SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION.

**MANY** things are requisite to the making of a right confession. First, a close searching of the conscience in reference to the commands of God, and thine own state.

And having discovered thy sins, weep over them bitterly, though they be but little ones, considering the offence offered against the Majesty of God, and man's ingratitude for His Love and Goodness. Do thou, therefore, condemn and accuse thyself in these words, "Is it thus thou requitest the Lord, O foolish and unwise? Is He not thy Father, Who has bought thee, and made thee, and created thee?"

And renewing in thyself again and again an ardent wish that thou hadst never offended Him, say, "Oh, that I had never offended Thee, my Creator, my Heavenly Father, my Redeemer, would that I had suffered rather all other evil."

Then turning to God with shame, and with full assurance that He will pardon thee, say to Him with thy whole heart,

"Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son, make me as one of Thy hired servants."

And renewing again thy sorrow for having offended God, and thy resolution rather to bear any suffering than willingly to offend Him again, confess thy sins, with shame and grief to thy confessor, just as they were committed, without excusing thyself, or accusing others.

After Confession, return thanks to God, that though thou hast so often and often offended Him, He is yet ever more ready to forgive, than the sinner to receive forgiveness.

And herein finding new cause for sorrow at having offended so loving a Father, determine with a fuller purpose, that by His help, thou wilt never more offend Him.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### HOW TO OVERCOME IMPURE PASSION.

ALL other passions are to be subdued by meeting them in open warfare, even though we be wounded therein, and by challenging them again to battle, till we have subdued them, in every will of theirs, great or small.

But impure passion must not only not be excited, but must be removed from all things which may in any way excite it.

The temptation then of the flesh is overcome, and impure passion mortified, by flight, and not by open resistance.

He then who flees fastest and farthest is most sure of victory.

Good habits, sincere intentions, past trials and



victories, relationship, and objects of inconsiderable and base appearance, which do not threaten danger, or whatever else seems to promise security, all these are no good arguments for not taking flight. Fly, fly, beloved soul, if thou wouldst not be taken captive.

For if some have escaped a fall, in spite of a life-long intercourse with most dangerous persons, this concerns thee not, it is in the judgments of God; besides, oftentimes where the falls are unseen, there such an one is most on the ground.

Do thou fly, in obedience to the advice and examples given thee by God in Holy Scripture, in the lives of so many eminent saints, and daily in that of some one person or another.

Fly, fly, without looking back to see or to think of the object from which thou art flying; for here too there is danger, lest thou turn back again.

And if thou must needs converse, let thine intercourse be brief and passing, and thy conversation rather blunt than courteous, for here also are snares, fire, and flame.

Here this following advice holds good:

“Use medicine or ever thou be sick.” Ecclus. xviii. 19.

Wait not till thou art sick, but fly betimes; for flight is the only safe medicine.

And if unhappily the sickness overtake thee, thy whole safety depends upon this, that as soon as thou dost perceive it, “thou take thy little ones<sup>1</sup>, and

<sup>1</sup>“What are the little ones of Babylon? Evil desires in their birth. When evil desire is born, ere evil custom gain strength against thee, while evil desire is little, beware lest it gain the strength of evil custom; while it is little, dash it in pieces.

dash them against the stones ;" then hasten to thy confessor, conceal not from him the most venial sin arising from this passion ; for if concealed, it will sprout up more and gain strength.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

HOW MANY THINGS ARE TO BE AVOIDED, THAT WE FALL NOT INTO THIS SIN.

MANY things must be avoided, if we would not give wings to the temptation of unlawful love.

First, and chiefly, we must avoid those persons who are manifestly dangerous. Secondly, others also as much as possible. Thirdly, visits, messages, presents, intercourse, even though distant, for what is distant may be more easily brought close, than what has once come close be made distant ; Fourthly, conversations concerning this passion, music, songs, or immoral books. Fifthly, (and this is but little known and heeded, and still less practised,) we should shun all delight in this world's goods, as clothes, various articles which are only kept in rooms for ease and luxury, dainty meats, and other indulgences which, though for the most part lawful in themselves, yet accustom the heart of man to please itself and make it greedy of pleasure. Hence, when tempted by unlawful pleasure, (which of its

But thou fearest, lest, though dashed down, it die not ; dash it against the Rock. But the Rock is Christ."—ST. AUG. in Pa. cxxxvi. ¶. 9.

own nature is quick to wound, piercing even to the marrow of the bones) that heart can scarce find courage to mortify itself in pleasures, having never practised it at other times.

On the contrary, hearts accustomed to shun lawful pleasures, if tempted by sinful and unlawful ones, will fly with the greatest ease, and not from them only, but from their very name.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE WHEN WE HAVE FALLEN INTO THIS SIN.

IF, through misfortune, or perhaps with deliberate purpose, thou have fallen into this carnal sin, the remedy (lest thou add sin to sin) is this ; fly at once, with all speed, and without further examination of conscience, to confession ; and, discarding all human prudence, speak plainly, and lay open all thy sickness, taking whatever medicine and advice may be given thee, be it ever so bitter and painful.

Delay not, though there be a hundred or a thousand reasons for delay ; for if thou delay, thou wilt fall again ; by reason of that second fall, other delays will arise, so that delays causing relapses, and relapses new delays, years will pass away before thou have confessed and arisen from the sin.

To conclude, then, the subject of this grievous sin, I counsel thee once more, fly, if thou wouldest not fall.

And if thoughts of it, how slight soever, come

into thy mind, regard them no less seriously, and fly from them no less speedily than from the greater. And though thou feel assured (having instantly rejected them) that they are light offences, still confess them, and make known thine enemy to thy confessor. And if thou have fallen, fly to confession, suffer not thyself to be conquered by shame.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

OF SOME MOTIVES WHEREBY THE SINNER MAY BE  
INDUCED TO RETURN SPEEDILY TO GOD.

THE first motive for the sinner's return to God is, the consideration of God Himself, Whom, as Supreme Good, and consummate Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, man ought not to have dared to offend. And this not for prudence sake; for it is an evil choice to dispute with the Almighty, and with the supreme Judge, Who will judge him. Nor yet for sake of justice and seemliness, for it is most intolerable that a mere nothing, a morsel of mire, a creature, should offend his Creator; the servant, his Lord; the benefited, his Benefactor; the son, his Father.

The second motive is, the sinner's deep obligation to return quickly to his Father's house. For the conversion of the son, and his return home, is the occasion of honour to the Father, and joy to all the household and neighbours, and to the Angels of Heaven.

For, as at first by his sin, the son offended and

angered his Father, so by his return, with bitter tears for his offences, and stedfast resolution to obey in future all His commands in all things, he so honours and delights his Father, so wounds His Heart, and moves it with compassion, that not content to wait for him longingly, He runs to meet him, falls on his neck, and kisses him, and clothes him with His grace, and with His other gifts.

The third motive is, self-interest ; for every sinner should consider, that if he turn not from his evil way in time, seeing that the winter is hastening on, and with it the eternal sabbath, he will be cast for ever into the pains of hell ; for were there no other torment to be feared than the infinite increase of those passions which held him captive in sin, without a hope of being able so much as to dip the tip of his finger in those waters which delighted him, this thought alone were enough to affright him.

Nor is it good to trust to intentions of conversion at the end of life, or at the end of some years or months ; for such intentions are foolish, and full of grievous impiety. It is a sign of folly to purpose overcoming a great difficulty at the very time when a man is most weak.

The sinner, who continues in sin, becomes every day less capable of conversion, both from the habit which, gradually strengthening, changes into nature ; and from increasing disinclination to receive the grace of conversion ; and also, because by the wicked impiety of clinging as long as possible to the creature, and then, late in life, or at the very last breath, giving himself, out of self-interest, to God, he has so angered Him, as to take from Him at last the will to aid him effectually.

Again, such a purpose and intention is that of a fool, for even allowing him still to be capable of conversion and effectual grace, who has assured the sinner, or who can assure him, that meanwhile he may not die suddenly and speechless, as has happened, and does happen to so many ?

Cry then, O sinner, cry aloud, even while thou art reading, unto thy Lord, and say :

“Turn me, O Lord, and I shall be turned ; for Thou art my God.”

And cease not to call unto Him until thou be converted to thy Lord and Father, weeping bitterly over thine offence against Him, and resigning thyself to whatever satisfaction He shall be pleased to require of thee.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE GIFT OF TEARS FOR THINE OFFENCES AGAINST GOD, AND THE GRACE OF CONVERSION.

THERE is no better way to obtain the gift of tears for thine offences against God, than meditation on the greatness of God's Goodness, and of the Love He has shown to man.

For he who considers that in sinning, he has offended Him Who is supreme Goodness and ineffable Love, Who is ever doing good, Who has never done, nor can do aught but good, pouring His favours, and dispensing His light, both to friends and foes ; and considers, moreover, that he has offended Him for nothing, for sake of some idle

fancy, or some trifling false pleasure, such an one cannot fail to shed floods of tears.

Place thyself then before a representation of Christ Crucified<sup>1</sup>, and imagine that He speaks thus unto thee ; “ Behold Me, and consider My Wounds, one by one ; for because of thy sins have I been thus wounded and evil entreated, even as thou seest.

“ And yet I am thy God, thy Creator, thy Merciful Lord and Pitiful Father.

“ Return then unto Me with holy tears, with earnest desire that thou hadst never offended Me, and with perfect willingness to endure any suffering that may keep thee from ever again offending Me. Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee.”

Then set Christ before thine eye, with the crown of thorns on His Head, the reed in His Hand, and covered with Wounds, and imagine that He says to thee : “ Behold the Man.” Behold the Man Who, loving thee with love unspeakable, hath redeemed thee through these sufferings, even with His Blood. “ Behold the Man.” He it is Whom thou hast offended, in spite of so much love and so many benefits bestowed on thee.

“ Behold the Man.” He is the Mercy of God and plenteous Redemption. For thee He offers Himself and all His Merits to the Father every hour and every moment. This Man, sitting at the Right Hand of the Father, intercedes for thee, and takes upon Him the office of thine Advocate. “ Wherefore then dost thou offend Me ? why wilt thou not return to Me ? ” “ Return to me, for I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression, and as a cloud, thy sins.”

<sup>1</sup> Crucifix.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF SOME REASONS WHY MEN LIVE WITHOUT WEEPING FOR THEIR SINS AGAINST GOD, WITHOUT HOLINESS, AND WITHOUT CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

MANY are the reasons why man slumbers on in lukewarmness, neither departing from sin, nor following after holiness as he ought. The following are some of them.

Because man dwells not within himself, to watch what goes on in the house of his soul, and who possesses it; but with a wandering and curious mind, he wastes his life in the pursuit of vanity. And even if he be busied with things lawful and good in themselves, even with such as relate to holiness and Christian perfection, yet he gives not his mind to them.

And if at times he has and knows his want, and is called and prompted by God to a change of life, he answers with the raven-cry, "Cras, cras," "presently, presently." But "to-morrow" never becomes "to-day," nor does "presently" become "now;" because through this evil custom of "to-morrow," "presently," each "to-day" and each "now," when come, brings forth to him a new "to-morrow," and a new "presently."

Nor are there wanting others who, believing that a real change of life, and the practice of virtue, consist in certain devotional acts, spend almost the whole day in making them<sup>1</sup>; but never set about

<sup>1</sup> "Saying Pater-nosters and Ave-Marias."—[ORIG].



mortifying those unruly passions which keep them in bondage to creatures.

Others gives themselves up to exercises of virtue, but build without a foundation; for every virtue has its proper foundation. For instance, humility is founded on the desire to be little or nothing accounted of, to be despised by others, and to be vile in its own sight. He then, who first lays this foundation, accepts afterwards with gladness the stones of the building of humility; which are slights from others, and opportunities for making acts of humility. Thus increasing in a desire to be vilely esteemed, and willingly receiving slights from others, he grows in the grace of humility; making it a constant and special subject of prayer to God, in virtue of the Humiliation of His Son.

And though all this be done by some persons, it is not always done out of love to virtue, or with a view to please God.

Hence it is, that the acts of this virtue produce not corresponding effects with all persons and in all places. Such men will be humble with some, and proud with others; humble before some, and proud before those whose good opinion does not further their designs.

Others there are who, desiring Christian perfection, seek it by their own strength, which is utter weakness, or by their own industry and exercises, and seek it not from God, mistrusting self; and so they go backward rather than forward.

Nor are there wanting those who, having but just entered upon the way of holiness, begin immediately to fancy that they have attained to perfection, and

so, having become vain in themselves, their holiness vanisheth also.

Wouldest thou then acquire Christian virtue and perfection, first distrust thyself, then trust in God, and study to kindle this desire in thyself as much as possible, increasing therein day by day.

Be careful also to let no opportunity escape thee, be it great or small, of exercising any virtue ; and if thou have let it slip, fail not in some way to chastise thyself on account of it, and never omit this chastisement.

And however great may be thy progress towards perfection, count thyself each day to be but beginning, and study to perform each action with as much diligence as if in it alone consisted all perfection ; and so with the second, the third, and the others. Avoid little faults as carefully, as diligent souls avoid great ones.

Embrace virtue for virtue's sake, and for the sake of pleasing God ; so wilt thou be the same at all times, whether alone or with others. And thou wilt thus learn sometimes to leave virtue for virtue, and God for God. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, neither turn back. Be discreet, a lover of solitude, meditation, and prayer, earnestly beseeching God to bestow on thee the virtue and perfection after which thou art seeking, because God is the Source of all virtue, and He Himself the Perfection to which He is hourly calling us.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## OF LOVE TOWARDS ENEMIES.

**THOUGH** Christian perfection consists in perfect obedience to the commands of God, yet does it principally proceed from the precept of loving our enemies; so much does this precept harmonize with the ways of God.

Wouldest thou then briefly and compendiously attain to this perfection, study to observe strictly what Christ enjoins in the command, "Love your enemies." Loving them, doing them good, and praying for them, not coldly and formally, but with so much affection, that thy heart, as it were emptied of self, may be wholly given to love of them, and prayer for them.

Doing them good; in all things relating to the welfare of the soul, be on thy guard, that from thee they may never take occasion of spiritual hurt. Ever show by thy gesture, words, and deeds, that thou dost love and value them, and art always ready to do them service.

As to other temporal benefits, prudence and judgment will teach thee what thou must do, guided by the condition of thine enemies, thine own situation, and the opportunities afforded thee.

If thou wilt attend to this, thou wilt see that peace and holiness will in great abundance enter into thine heart.

Nor is this precept so difficult as some believe.

It is, doubtless, hard to nature ; but to him who is desirous and watchful to mortify the impulses of nature and of hatred, it will become easy, secretly bringing with it a sweet peace and facility.

However, to assist thy weakness, thou mayest have recourse to four most powerful helps.

One is prayer ; frequently imploring from Christ this gift of love in virtue of His Own, Who, when hanging on the Cross, thought first of the welfare of His enemies, next of His Mother, and last of Himself.

The second help will be to say to thyself, "It is my Lord's command that I should love my enemies ; therefore I must needs do it."

The third ; that seeing in them the lively image of God, Who impressed it on them in creation, thou mayest arouse thyself to love and reverence it.

The fourth ; that further beholding also the inestimable Price with which Christ redeemed them, not with silver and gold, but with His Own Blood, thou shouldest so act that It be not spent in vain, wasted and trampled upon.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### OF THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

THE examination of conscience is usually made by the diligent soul three times a day. Before dinner ; before vespers ; and before going to bed. But if some cannot do this, the evening examination should never be neglected ; for if God twice beheld the

works which He did to man, shall not man look more than once at all he does to God, and for which he must, moreover, render Him a strict account?

The examination should be made as follows. First ask God for light to know all that is within thee and all thy works.

Then consider how far thou hast been shut up and collected within thy heart, and how thou hast guarded it.

Next; see how thou hast obeyed God during the past day, in all the opportunities which He has given thee to serve Him. I say nothing further on this head; for this third consideration includes the state and obligation of each individual.

After thanking God for any good work thou hast performed, or any instance in which thou hast corresponded to grace given, dismiss it wholly from thy mind, desiring to begin thy course anew, as if thou hadst hitherto done nothing.

As to failings, faults, and sins, turn to God, and say to Him with grief for having offended Him,

“Lord, I have done this of myself, nor should I have stopped even here, if Thy Right Hand had not upheld me: for this I return Thee thanks. Now O Lord, I pray Thee, in the Name of Thy Beloved Son, do Thou that which belongs to Thee: pardon me, and give me grace not to offend thee.”

In penitence then for thy faults, and as a spur to amendment, mortify thy will in some permitted trifle, for this is well pleasing unto Him. I say the same of the body; neglect not these or similar acts of penance, unless thou wouldest make the searching of thy conscience a mere form, and render it fruitless by a lukewarm performance of it.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## TWO RULES FOR LIVING PEACEABLY.

ALTHOUGH he who lives according to what has been thus far laid down will always live in peace, I will however, in this last chapter, give thee two rules, comprised also in the foregoing, by observing which thou mayest live in this wicked world in all possible peace and quietness.

The first is, to strive with all diligence to close the door of thy heart more and more against desires. For desire is the principal beam of the cross, and the source of all disquietude, and will be heavy in proportion to the vehemence of the desire. And if the desires be many and various, the heavier will be the beams, and the more numerous the crosses awaiting thee. Hence follow difficulties and hindrances to the fulfilling of these desires; and there behold the transverse beam, the cross of the cross, to which the desiring soul is nailed.

Whoso then would avoid the cross, let him also avoid desires; and if he find himself on the cross, let him give up the desire, for so soon as he renounces it, shall he come down from the cross. There is no other remedy.

The other rule is this. When thou art offended or annoyed by others, suffer not thy thoughts to dwell thereon, or on any thing relating to them. For example, "that they ought not so to have treated thee; who they are, or whom they think themselves to be;" or the like; for all this is fuel and kindling of wrath, anger, and hatred.

**But** have instant recourse, in such cases, to the **Might** and the **Commands** of **God**, that thou mayest learn what to do, lest thou err more grievously than they. So shalt thou return into the path of holiness and peace.

For if thou canst not deal with thyself aright, what marvel is it if others fail so to deal with thee?

And if thou wouldest avenge thyself of those who offend thee, thou shouldest first take vengeance upon thyself, than whom thou hast not a greater enemy and offender.

OF INWARD PEACE,  
OR,  
THE PATH TO PARADISE.

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CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF OUR HEART, AND HOW  
IT SHOULD BE GOVERNED.

God made thy heart for this end alone; to be loved and possessed by Him. And by means of this love thou mayest do with it what thou wilt; and all things, however difficult, will thus be made very easy to thee. The first thing then thou hast to do is, so to ground and fix the intention of thy heart, that the outward may spring from the inward. For although bodily penances, and all exercises by which the flesh is chastised and afflicted, are praiseworthy, when moderated by discretion, according to the circumstances of those who use them, yet by such means alone thou wilt never acquire a single virtue; but rather vanity and the wind of vain-glory; and all thy labour will be lost unless these exercises be quickened and regulated by the interior.



The life of man is nothing else but continual warfare and temptation ; and because of this warfare, thou must watch always, and keep a guard upon thy heart, so that it be ever in peace and quietness. And if some movement of any sensual disquiet whatsoever arise within thy soul, be careful to calm it instantly, stilling thy heart, and suffering it not to wander or turn aside after any of these things. Do this whenever any thing occurs to disturb thee, whether in prayer, or at any other time ; and know that thou wilt have learnt to pray aright when thou hast learnt thus to act ; but observe, that all must be done with gentleness and without effort. In short, the chief and constant exercise of thy life should be to quiet thy heart, and never suffer it to go astray.

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## CHAPTER II.

### OF THE CARE TO BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE A PEACEFUL SPIRIT.

BE careful then, before all things, to place this sentinel of peace over thy feelings ; it will lead thee to great things without any labour, nay, with great tranquillity and security ; and with this sentinel, given thee by God, thou shalt so watch over thyself, as to be enabled to pray, to obey, to humble thyself, and to endure injuries without disquietude. True it is, that ere thou canst attain to this peace, thou wilt have to suffer much labour from want of practice, but afterwards thy soul will be greatly comforted by any contradiction which may befall it, and from day to day thou wilt better learn this exercise of quieting thy spirit. And if, at times, thou find thyself so troubled

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and disturbed, as to seem unable to give thyself peace, have immediate recourse to prayer, and persevere therein, in imitation of Christ our Lord, Who prayed three times in the garden, to give thee an example that thy sole resource and refuge must be prayer, and that however sorrowful and faint-hearted thou feel thyself, thou must not part from it, till thou find thy will conformed to God's Will, and consequently devout and full of peace, yea, moreover, wholly inspirited and emboldened to receive and embrace that which at first it feared and abhorred, going to meet it: "Arise, let us be going; Behold! he is at hand which doth betray Me."

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### CHAPTER III.

HOW BY LITTLE AND LITTLE THIS PEACEFUL HABITATION IS TO BE BUILT UP.

TAKE care (as has been said) never to let thy heart be troubled, nor meddle with things, which may disquiet it, but ever strive to keep it calm; for in this way the Lord will build up in thy soul a city of peace, and thy heart shall be a house of pleasures and delights. This only does He require of thee; that whenever thy heart is ruffled, thou shouldest set about calming and quieting thyself anew, in all thy works and thoughts. For as a city is not built in a day, neither must thou expect in a day to acquire this inward peace; because this is nothing less than building a house unto the Lord, and a tabernacle to the Most High, making thyself His temple; and the Lord Himself must be the Builder of this house, else

thy labour would be in vain. Remember also, that the whole chief foundation of this exercise must be humility.

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## CHAPTER IV.

THAT THE SOUL MUST REFUSE ALL CONTENTMENT;  
FOR THIS IS THE TRUE HUMILITY AND POVERTY  
OF SPIRIT BY WHICH THIS PEACE OF THE SOUL  
IS OBTAINED.

WOULDEST thou then enter by this gate of humility, (for other entrance there is none,) thou must toil and strive (especially at the outset) to embrace tribulations and contradictions as dear sisters, desiring to be despised by all, and to have none to favour thee, nor to comfort thee, but thy God Alone. Impress and fix in thy heart, that God Alone is thy Good and thine only Refuge, and that all other things are thorns unto thee; woe unto thee if thou press them to thy heart! And if some indignity be offered thee, thou shouldest be glad thereof, bearing it joyfully, and holding for certain, that then God is with thee. Neither shouldest thou desire, nor ever seek any other honour, but to suffer for love of Him, and whatever tends to His greater Glory. Strive to rejoice when others use towards thee words of injury, or rebuke thee, or despise thee; for a rich treasure lies hid beneath this dust, and if thou take it willingly, thou wilt soon find thyself rich, unperceived even by those who have made thee so. Never seek to be loved or esteemed by any in this life; that thou mayest be left to suffer with Christ Crucified, and that none may hinder thee. Be on thy guard against thyself, as

thine own worst enemy. Follow not thine own will, thine own mind, thine own opinion, if thou wouldest not destroy thyself. To this end thou must have weapons to defend thee from thyself; and whenever thy will would incline to any thing, how holy soever, lay it first alone, and naked, and with deep humility before thy Lord; beseeching Him, that not thy will, but His be done therein; and this, with desires wholly mortified and free from all admixture of self-love, knowing that of thyself thou hast nothing, and canst do nothing. Beware of thine own conceits, which bear with them a semblance of sanctity and indiscreet zeal, of which the Lord says, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; by their fruits ye shall know them." Their fruits are, to leave within the soul anxiety and disquiet. All things which lead thee away from humility, and from this inward peace and quietness, under whatsoever colour or semblance, are false prophets, which, in sheep's clothing, that is, under colour of zeal, and of aiding thy neighbour indiscreetly, are ravening wolves, which prey upon thy humility, and upon that peace and quietness so necessary to all who wish to derive certain benefit. And the greater the semblance of holiness in any thing, the more narrowly must it be examined into; and this, (as has been afore said,) with much repose and inward quiet. And if, at any time, thou shouldest fail in some one of these, be not disturbed, but humble thyself before thy Lord, acknowledge thy weakness, and learn a lesson for the future. For, it may be, God permits it, in order to humble some pride which lies hid within thee, and thou knowest it not. If, at any time, thou feel thy spirit wounded by some sharp and

envenomed thorn, be not therefore disquieted; but watch the more carefully, lest it enter further, and penetrate within. Withdraw thy heart, and gently move thy will into its abode of quietness and peace; keeping thy soul purely to God, Whom thou wilt ever find within thee and in the depth of thy heart, because of the uprightness of thine intention. And be well assured that every thing happens in order to prove thee; that so He may fit thee to receive thy good things, and thou mayest deserve the crown of righteousness laid up for thee by His infinite mercy.

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## CHAPTER V.

HOW THE SOUL MUST KEEP HERSELF IN MENTAL SOLITUDE, THAT GOD MAY WORK WITHIN HER.

**REGARD** therefore thine own soul very highly, because the Father of fathers, and Lord of lords, has created it for His habitation and temple. Esteem it so highly, as never to suffer it to abase itself, or incline to any other object. Let all thy desires and hopes be for the coming of the Lord, Who will not visit thy soul, unless He find it in solitude. Think not, that in the presence of others He will vouchsafe her a single word, save to threaten her, and fly from her. He will have her emptied, as much as may be, of thoughts, wholly emptied of desires, and still more of self-will. Yet must thou not indiscreetly impose penances upon thyself, nor seek opportunities of suffering for the love of God, under the sole guidance of thine own will; but with the advice of thy spiritual father, and of thy superiors,

who will rule thee in the place of God; Who, through their means, disposes thy will, and does with it what He wills, and as He wills. Yet thou shalt not do what thou wouldest; but let God do in thee what He wills. Let thy will be always so disengaged from self, that thou wilt not anything; and if thou dost will anything, let it be in such a manner, that if the thing done be not according to thy will but contrary to it, thou mayest feel no regret, but preserve as calm a spirit as if thou hadst willed nothing. This is the true liberty of the soul, not to bind itself to anything whatsoever. If thou wilt give up thy soul to God thus free, unfettered, and alone, thou shalt see what wonders He will work in her. O admirable solitude, secret chamber of the Most High, where only He will give audience, and not elsewhere, and there speak to the heart of the soul! O desert, changed into Paradise, for there only does God vouchsafe to be seen and spoken with! "I will turn aside, and see this great sight."

But if thou wouldest arrive thereto, enter barefoot upon this ground; for it is holy. First, put off thy shoes from thy feet, that is, the affections of thy soul, and leave them bare and free: carry neither purse nor scrip upon this road; for thou art to desire nothing of this world, though it be sought after by others: neither salute any man; but fix thy whole thoughts and affections in God Alone, and not in creatures: leave the dead to bury their dead; go thou alone to the land of the living, and let death have no part in thee.

## CHAPTER VI.

OF THE PRUDENCE BY WHICH THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR SHOULD BE REGULATED, LEST IT DISTURB THIS PEACE.

EXPERIENCE itself will teach thee, if thou wilt try it, that this path of charity and love towards God and our neighbour is very plain and open in leading to eternal life. The Lord said that He "came to bring fire upon the earth," and that His only desire was, that it should be "kindled." And although the love of God has no limit, it must be otherwise with the love of our neighbour, which, if not duly moderated, might do thee much harm, and lead thee, in order to gain others, to lose and ruin thyself.

Thou shouldest so love thy neighbour as not to injure thine own soul thereby. Though thou art bound to set a good example, thou must never do anything solely with this view, else wouldest thou lose all profit to thyself. Do all things with simplicity and holiness, without regard to anything but to please God Alone. Humble thyself in all thy works, and thou wilt learn how little thou canst by them help others. Consider that thou art not to be fervent and zealous for souls, in such wise as to lose quiet and peace. Cherish an ardent desire and thirst that all men may know the truth which thou dost know and understand, and be inebriated with that wine which God promises to each one, and gives without price.

This thirst for the salvation of thy neighbour thou shouldest feel at all times ; but it should spring

from thy love to God, and not from thine indiscreet zeal. God it is Who must plant it in the solitude of thy soul, and He must gather the fruit thereof when He pleases. Thou must sow nothing of thyself, but offer unto God the ground of thy heart, cleared of everything; for then He will sow His own seed therein, according to His good pleasure; and so shall it bring forth fruit. Ever remember that God wills this thy soul to be alone, and detached from all things, that He may unite it to Himself. Suffer Him Alone to choose thee; hinder Him not by thy free will. Sit thou still without a thought of self, save that of pleasing God, waiting to be led to thy work; for the master of the house is already gone out, and is seeking labourers. Cast off all thought and care, strip thyself of all anxiety concerning self, and of all affection for earthly things, that God may clothe thee with Himself, and give thee that which is beyond thy power to conceive: wholly forget self as much as may be, and let the love of God alone dwell in thy soul. Of all that has been said, keep this in mind, that with all diligence (or rather, without anxious diligence) thou must temper and moderate thy zeal and fervour, that thou mayest in all peace and tranquillity retain God within thee, and that thy soul lose not its capital (which is the one thing needful), by indiscreetly putting it out to interest for sake of others. Silence, such as has been here described, is a loud cry in the Ear of God; idleness such as this manages everything, and with such alone must thou trade, if thou wouldest be rich towards God; for this is nothing else than to resign thy soul to God, detached from all things. And this thou must do moreover, without taking any merit to thyself, or thinking to do



any great thing; for God does all, and on thy part the Lord requires only, that thou humble thyself before Him, and offer Him a heart wholly free and detached from earthly things, with an inward desire that His Divine Will may, in all and through all things, be perfectly fulfilled in thee.

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## CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE SOUL, STRIPPED OF HER OWN WILL,  
SHOULD PRESENT HERSELF BEFORE GOD.

THOU must begin then in this way, gently and gradually, trusting in that same Lord Who calls thee, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "All ye that are athirst come to the Fountain." This Divine motion and calling thou must follow, awaiting therewith the impulse of the Holy Spirit, to throw thyself resolutely and blindly into the ocean of this Divine Providence, and of the Eternal Good Pleasure, praying that It may be done in thee, and that thus thou mayest be borne onward by the mighty waves of the Divine Will, without power of resistance, and be carried to the haven of thine own individual perfection and salvation. Having performed this act, which should be repeated a hundred thousand times a day, study and endeavour with all possible confidence, both inward and outward, to pursue, with the whole powers of thy mind, such things as excite thee to the praise, the love, and the desire after God. And let these acts be done without effort or violence to thy heart, lest by

an indiscreet use of them, they serve to weaken, and perhaps to harden, or incapacitate thee. Take the advice of those who are experienced, and try to accustom thyself to be, always in desire, and when possible in act, engaged in the contemplation of God's Goodness and of His continual and loving blessings, and receive with humility the drops which will descend into thy soul from His inestimable Goodness. Beware of trying to force thyself to tears or other sensible devotion; but abide quietly in inward solitude, waiting till the Will of God be done in thee; and when He gives thee tears, they shall be sweet, without labour or effort of thine own; therefore accept them then with all gentleness and serenity, and especially, with all humility. The key which unlocks the secrets of the spiritual treasury is, the knowing how to deny thyself, at all times, and in all things; and with the same key the door is closed against insipidity and dryness of spirit, when such comes through our own fault; for when it comes from God, it is numbered among the other treasures of the soul. As much as thou canst, love to sit with Mary at the Feet of Christ, and listen to what the Lord says to thee. See that thine enemies (the greatest of whom is thyself) rob thee not of this holy silence. And when with thine understanding thou goest forth to find God, in order to repose in Him, beware of drawing any limit or comparison with thy weak and narrow imagination; for He is infinitely beyond all comparison, Who is through all, and in all, and in Him are all things. Him thou wilt find in thine inmost soul, whenever thou shalt seek Him faithfully in order to find thyself. For His delight is to dwell with us, the children of men, to make us worthy of

Him, though He hath no need of us. In meditation do not so tie thyself down to certain points, that thou wilt meditate upon none other; but wherever thou shalt find rest, there stop and enjoy the Lord, at whatever step of the way He shall be pleased to communicate Himself to thee. And though thou omit what thou hadst laid down, have no scruple; for the sole end of these exercises is to enjoy the Lord, yet with intent not to make such enjoyment the principal end; but rather to make us love His works the more, with purpose to imitate Him as far as we can. And having found the end, we must be no longer anxious as to the means laid down for its attainment. One of the hindrances to true peace and quietness, is the anxiety and thought we give to such works, binding the spirit, and dragging it after one thing or another, and in this way insisting that God should lead it by the path we wish, and forcing it to walk along the road of our own imagining; unconsciously caring more to do our own will herein than the Will of our Lord, which is nothing else than to seek God by flying from Him, and to wish to please God without doing His Will. If thou desire really to advance in this path, and to reach the desired end, thou must have no other purpose, no other wish, but to find God; and wheresoever He wills to manifest Himself to thee, there leave all else and go no farther, till thou have permission; forget all things beside, and repose thee in thy Lord. And when it shall please His Divine Majesty to withdraw and cease to manifest Himself in this way, then turn again to seek Him, continuing thy exercises; and always with the same purpose and desire, to find, by their means, Him

Whom thy soul loveth ; and having found Him, do as we before said ; leave all things, knowing that His desire is then fulfilled. And this should be well considered, because many spiritual persons lose much peace and profit by wearying themselves with their exercises, fancying they do nothing unless they complete them all ; thinking perfection to consist herein, making themselves masters of their own will ; to this end living a life of toil, as one who labours at a task, without ever attaining that true repose and inward peace in which the Lord verily dwells and rests.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE FAITH WE SHOULD HAVE IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR ; AND OF THE OFFERING WE SHOULD MAKE OF OURSELVES UNTO THE LORD.

STUDY daily to increase and strengthen in thy soul faith in the most Holy Sacrament, and cease not to wonder at so incomprehensible a Mystery, and to rejoice therein, considering how God manifests Himself under these pure and humble elements, to make thee more worthy ; for "Blessed are they who see not and believe." Desire not that in this life He should manifest Himself to thee under any other form. Strive to inflame thy will in Him, and to be daily more ready to do His Will always, and in all things. When thou dost offer thyself to God in this Sacrament, thou must be willing and prepared to

suffer, for love of Him, all torments, pains, and injuries, which may befall thee, and any sickness, weariness, and dryness in prayer and out of it, considering that thou must endure all this repeatedly, and must take it in good part, and be careful not to be thyself the cause thereof; and all thy delight must be to suffer with thy Dear and Loving Jesus for the love of Him. Be not inconstant in what thou dost undertake, desiring one thing to day, and another to morrow, but be steadfast and persevering; and be assured that by using these means, (yet labouring always with the aforesaid gentleness,) it is impossible but that thou wilt persevere unto the end; for thou wilt not be able to live even for an hour out of this peace. It would be to thee intolerable suffering.

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## CHAPTER IX.

THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO SEEK ENJOYMENT, NOR ANYTHING WHICH GIVES PLEASURE; BUT GOD ONLY.

ALWAYS choose hardness, and delight to be without the consolation of particular friendships and favours which are unprofitable to the soul; and love to be ever subject to, and dependent on the will of others.

Let everything be a means of leading thee to God, and let nothing hinder thee on the way.

Be this thy consolation: that all things be bitter unto thee, and God Alone be thy rest. Direct all thy labours to thy Lord; love Him and give Him

thy whole heart, and fear not but that He will find a way to solve all thy doubts, and to raise thee up when thou shalt fall. Lastly, in one word, if thou wilt love Him, thou shalt have every good.

Offer thyself as a sacrifice to God in peace and quietness of spirit. And the better to proceed in this journey, and support thyself without weariness and disquiet, dispose thy soul at every step, by widening out thy will to meet the Will of God. The more thou dost widen it, the more wilt thou receive. Thy will must be disposed as follows: to will everything and to will nothing, if God wills it or wills it not. Always at each step renew thy purpose to be pleasing unto God, and never determine in any matter upon the course thou wilt pursue beyond the present moment, but hold thyself at liberty.

No one, however, is forbidden to attend to his necessities according to his condition, with prudent care and diligence. For this is in accordance with God's Will, and is no impediment to peace, nor to true spiritual progress. Resolve in all things to do what thou canst, and oughtest to do; and be indifferent and resigned to all that may ensue, out of thyself.

What thou mayest do at all times is, to offer thy will to God, and desire no longer to will anything. For, as soon as thou shalt attain to this liberty, and shalt be free in every direction (as thou mayest be in all times and places whether occupied, or unoccupied) thou wilt enjoy tranquillity and peace. In this liberty of spirit consists the great blessing thou art seeking. This liberty is nought else but perseverance of the inward man within himself, not allowing himself to will, or desire, or seek anything out of himself; and

as long as thou shalt abide thus free, thou shalt enjoy that divine bondage which is the great kingdom that is within us.

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## CHAPTER X.

THAT GOD'S SERVANT MUST NOT LOSE HEART, THOUGH HE FEEL WITHIN HIMSELF SOME REPUGNANCE AND DISINCLINATION TOWARDS THIS PEACE.

THOU must expect to be often disquieted and robbed of this sweet and holy solitude and blessed freedom ; and from the emotions of thy heart will sometimes rise a cloud of dust, which will give thee much annoyance on the road thou hast to travel. God permits this for thy greater good. Remember that this is the war whence the saints bore away crowns of great merit. In all things that disquiet thee thou shalt say, " Lord, behold Thy servant ; let Thy Will be done in me. I know and confess that the truth of Thy word shall stand sure for ever. Thy promises are infallible, and in them do I trust. Behold Thy creature ; do with me what Thou wilt. My God, I have nothing to hinder me. I am Thine alone." Happy the soul which thus offers itself to its Lord, whenever it is disturbed and unquiet. And if the conflict continue long, and thou canst not, as quickly as thou wouldest, conform thy will to the Will of God, be not disheartened nor dismayed : continue in prayer and self-oblation, for thou shalt gain the victory.

Consider Christ's conflict in the garden, and how His Humanity recoiled from it, saying, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But forth-

with, He placed His Soul in solitude, and with a free and unshackled Will He said, with deep humility, "Nevertheless, not My Will, but Thine be done." "Go, and do thou likewise." When thou findest thyself in any difficulty, stir not one step until thou shalt have raised thine eyes to Christ on the Cross ; for there thou wilt see written and engraved in very large letters, how thou shouldst demean thyself. Copy faithfully from this example. Be not dismayed, if thou be sometimes disturbed by thy self-love ; withdraw not thyself from beneath the Cross, but return to prayer, and persevere in humility till thou lose thine own will, and desire that God's Will may be done in thee : and if thou shalt go away from prayer, having reaped therefrom this fruit only, be content ; but if thou have not attained to this, thy soul is left fasting and without its food. Strive to let no one thing dwell in thy heart, not even for a short time, but GOD only. Be free from gall or bitterness towards anything whatsoever. Look not at the wickedness and evil example of others ; but be as a little child, who is still free from all such bitterness, and passes by everything without offence.

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## CHAPTER XI.

OF THE PAINS THE DEVIL TAKES TO DISTURB THIS PEACE, AND HOW WE SHOULD GUARD OURSELVES FROM HIS WILES.

As it is the custom of our adversary to seek to devour souls, he uses all his efforts to lead them away



from humility and simplicity, and make them attribute something to themselves, and to their own diligence and industry, not considering the gift of grace, without which, no man can name the Name of Jesus.

And though of ourselves and with our own free will, we may resist this grace, yet without it, we have no power to accept it. So that if any man receive it not, he does not and cannot receive it, without this same grace, which is yet sufficiently offered to all. Our adversary strives then to make a man think and believe that it is of himself that he is more diligent than others, and better disposed to receive the gifts of God; and to make him perform this act with pride, not considering his own insufficiency (if unaided); that thence he may be led on to despise others in his heart, who do not the same good works that he does. Therefore, unless thou be very watchful, and return, instantly and with all speed, to humble, and abase, and annihilate thyself, (as has been said) he will cause thee to fall into pride, like that Pharisee mentioned in the Gospel, who boasted of his own good works, and judged the evil deeds of others. And if by this means he ever takes possession of thy will, he will make himself its master, filling it with all manner of wickedness, to thy great hurt and danger. Therefore did the Lord warn us to watch and pray. It is needful then for thee to stand most carefully on thy guard, lest the enemy rob thee of so great a treasure as quietness and peace of mind; for he strives with all his might to strip thee of this repose, and to make thy soul live in anxiety and disquiet, knowing that herein consists all sort of loss and hurt; for if a soul

be peaceful, it does everything with ease, it does enough, and does all well ; hence it perseveres willingly, and easily resists all opposition : and on the contrary, if it be disturbed and disquieted, it does little, and that very imperfectly, is soon weary, and in short, lives in a fruitless martyrdom. Wouldest thou then come off victorious, and that the enemy spoil not thy labour, there is no one point on which thou must be more guarded than in not suffering disquiet to enter thy soul, nor consenting to it even for a moment. And the better to know how to guard thyself against the wiles of Satan, take it in this case for a certain rule, that every thought which discourages and removes thee from increasing in love and trust towards God, is a messenger of hell ; and as such, thou must drive him away, and neither admit him, nor give him a hearing. For the office of the Holy Spirit is none other than always and on all occasions to unite souls more closely to God, kindling and inflaming them in His sweet love, and inspiring them with fresh confidence ; whilst that of the devil is always the contrary, using to this end all the means in his power, such as infusing excessive fear, aggravating ordinary weakness, suggesting that the soul does not prepare herself as she should, either for confession, or Communion, or prayer, and so making her always disheartened, fearful, and disquieted. The want of sensible devotion, and of consolation in prayer and in other exercises, he makes an occasion of impatient sadness, giving the soul to understand that in this way all is lost, and that it were better to leave off so many exercises ; and he brings her at last into such great anxiety and distrust as to make her think that, do what she will, all is vain and fruitless ; hence

her grief and fear go on increasing, till she thinks herself forgotten by God. But such is not the truth. For innumerable are the benefits which would flow from dryness and want of sensible devotion, as often as the soul understood what God by these means would do for her, asking only on her part patience and perseverance in well-doing to the best of her power. And that thou mayest understand this the better, and that the blessing and the benefit which God wills to bestow on thee, may not (from thy want of understanding) turn to thy hurt, I will briefly state in this place the benefits that come of humble perseverance in these dry exercises, that, knowing them, thou mayest not therefore lose peace of mind, when thou findest thyself afflicted by similar dryness of mind and oppression of heart, concerning the feeling and comfort of devotion, and in any other temptation, how fearful soever it be.

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## CHAPTER XII.

THAT THE SOUL MUST NOT DISQUIET ITSELF BECAUSE  
OF INWARD TEMPTATIONS.

MANY are the blessings which spiritual bitterness and dryness brings to the soul, if only it be received with all humility and patience. Did man but understand this, he would doubtless feel less disquiet and grief when overtaken by it; because he would look upon it not as a sign of his Lord's hatred, but of His great and special love; and he would receive it as a signal favour vouchsafed to him. This is very

evident, when we consider that such things befall those only who desire to devote themselves more especially to God's service, and to avoid all things which may offend Him ; and this seldom happens at the beginning of their conversion, but after they have served the Lord for some time, and are resolved to will to serve Him more perfectly, and have already put their hand to the work. We never see that sinners, or persons given up to worldly things, complain of such temptations ; whence it plainly appears that this is a precious food wherewith God feeds those whom He loves ; and though it be insipid to our taste, it nevertheless strengthens us wonderfully, though at the time we perceive it not, because the soul, finding itself in such a state of dryness, and, moreover, often enduring such temptations as shock her even to think of, is by this means filled with that fear and detestation of self, and that humility which God desires to see in her, although (as has been said) she, not understanding at the time this secret, detests it, and shrinks from walking in such a path, like one unwilling to remain ever without joy and consolation, and without them, esteeming all other exercises but as lost time and fruitless labour.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THAT TEMPTATIONS ARE GIVEN TO US BY GOD FOR  
OUR GOOD.

To understand then, more particularly, how it is that temptations are given to us by God for our good, we must consider, that man, because of the

evil inclination of corrupt nature, is proud and lofty in his own conceit, always thinking more highly of himself than he ought. This self-esteem is so dangerous to true spiritual progress, that the very odour of it is a sufficient hindrance in the path to true perfection. Therefore our most faithful God, in His loving Providence over each one, and especially over those who have truly given themselves up to His service, takes care to place us in such a situation as to enable us to escape from so great danger; forcing us, as it were, to come to a true knowledge of ourselves. Thus did He with the Apostle St. Peter, suffering him to deny Him, that so he might know himself, and no longer trust in himself; and with the Apostle St. Paul, to whom, after He had caught him up into the third heaven, and imparted to him divine secrets, He gave a wearisome temptation, in order that, knowing his own weakness, he might be humble, glorying only in his infirmities, and that the greatness of the revelation vouchsafed to him by God should not lift him up into presumption, as he himself says. God then, in compassion to our misery and perverse will, permits these temptations to come upon us, and to be sometimes very dreadful, and in various forms, that we may humble ourselves and know ourselves, though to us they seem to be useless. And herein He shows His Wisdom and Goodness, because through those things which to us seem most hurtful, He most benefits us; for thereby we come to humble ourselves the more, which is the thing above all others that our soul most needs. For it generally happens that the servant of God, who is troubled by such like thoughts, indevotion, and dryness of spirit, thinks that this arises from his own

imperfections, and that there cannot be another soul as sinful or as lukewarm in God's service as his ; he believes that such thoughts come into the minds of those only who are forsaken of God, and that therefore he deserves to be thus forsaken. Hence he, who once thought himself to be something, comes, by the use of this bitter medicine, sent him from heaven, to count himself the vilest of men, and even unworthy of the name of Christian : nor would he ever have come to so low an estimation of himself, nor to such deep humility, had not great tribulations and these strange temptations forced him to it. For one favour which God confers in this life upon the soul that has wholly placed and resigned herself into His Hands, is to medicine her as He pleases, and with such medicines as He alone perfectly knows to be necessary to her health and well-being. Besides this fruit, which our souls reap from similar temptations and want of devotion, there are many others. For he who is thus afflicted, is almost compelled to have recourse to God, and to try to do good works, as a remedy for his distress ; and in like manner, in order to free himself from such suffering, he sets about examining his heart, avoiding all sin, and everything which seems to be imperfect, or which may, in any way, remove him further from God. And so this tribulation, which he took to be so adverse and hurtful, serves afterwards as a scourge to drive him to seek God with greater fervour, and to avoid everything which he thinks to be not conformable to the Divine Will. And lastly, all these tribulations, and all the fatigue and labour which the soul endures under these temptations and want of spiritual delight, are but a loving purgatory, if borne (as has been said)

with patience and humility, and serve to win for us that crown in heaven which by such means only can be obtained, and which shall be glorious in proportion to the greatness of those labours and fatigues. Hence we perceive how little reason we have to be discontented and disturbed on this account, as is the way with persons of little experience, who attribute to the devil, or to their own sins and imperfections, that which comes to them from the Hand of God, and who mistake tokens of love for indications of hatred, and think that Divine favours and caresses are blows which come from an irritated heart, and believe all they do to be lost and worthless, and that such loss is without remedy. Whereas, did they but believe what is the fact; i. e. that there is no loss, but rather great gain (provided the soul, as she ever may, avail herself of the opportunity), and that all is a proof of God's loving remembrance of us; it would then be impossible for them to disquiet themselves, or to lose their peace, because they were disturbed by many temptations and imaginations, and found themselves dry and indevout in prayer and in other exercises. On the contrary, they would then, with renewed perseverance, humble their souls in the Sight of the Lord, purposing, in all and through all, to accomplish the Divine Will in whatever way the Lord may will to make use of them in this world; using diligence to keep themselves in peace and tranquillity; accepting all things at the Hand of their Heavenly Father, in Which alone is the cup that is given them to drink. For whether trouble and temptation come from the devil or from men, or because of sins, or in whatsoever way, still it is God who sends it thee; though He offers it thee in various

ways, according to His Good pleasure. For it is the evil of the trouble alone which reaches unto thee, and this is always from Him Who orders it for thy good. Though the evil of the fault committed, (for instance, by thy neighbour, in injuring or insulting thee,) is contrary to His Will, yet He makes use of it for thy benefit and health. Therefore, instead of giving way to grief and discontent, thou shouldest thank Him with inward joy and gladness, doing all that thou canst do with perseverance and resolution, not losing time, and with it, the many and great merits which God wills thee to gain, by this opportunity which He offers thee.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### OF THE REMEDY TO BE USED AGAINST UNEASINESS UNDER FAULTS AND FAILURES.

IF at any time thou shalt fall into some sin or negligence in word or deed, such as disquieting thyself at anything which befalls thee, or murmuring, or listening to murmurs, or falling into disputation, or impatience, or curiosity, or suspicion of others, or into any other fault, whether once or many times; disturb not thyself, neither be disheartened and grieved at the thought of what has happened, being confounded within thyself; at one time thinking that thou wilt never be free from such frailties; at another, that thine imperfection and weakness of purpose have been the cause of them; or again representing to thyself that thou art not really walking in the spirit and in the way of the Lord; and with a



thousand other fears, loading thy soul at every step with discontent and cowardice. Hence it follows, that thou art ashamed to appear before God, or thou approachest Him distrustfully, as though thou hadst broken the faith thou owest Him; and, as a remedy, thou lovest time in thinking over these things, scrutinizing how far thou didst it deliberately, and if thou didst consent to it; if thou didst it willingly or no, or if thou didst reject the thought. And because thou hast not taken the right road, the more thou thinkest of it, the less thou dost understand thyself, and the more does thy perplexity and trouble increase, and thy anxiety to confess thyself; and thou goest to confession with an uneasy fear; and after having lost much time in making thy confession, thy spirit is but the more disquieted, from the idea of not having told all; and so thou ledest a most bitter and anxious life, with little fruit, and losing great part of the merit of it. And all this arises from not understanding thy natural weakness, and not knowing the way in which the soul should treat with God. For after having fallen into all the above-named frailties, or into any other, she may more easily treat with Him by a humble and loving conversion, than by the grief and discontent she feels for the fault, dwelling only upon the examination of venial and ordinary sins, of which especially I am speaking. For into such only does a soul commonly fall, which is living in the manner here supposed: and I speak only for those who are leading a spiritual life, and who are striving to advance therein, and who are free from mortal sin; for with regard to those who live carelessly and in mortal sin, and are continually offending God, these need another kind of exhortation, and this

medicine is not for them. For such have great need to be disturbed and to weep, and to give much thought to self-examination and confession, lest through their own fault and negligence, they lose the remedy necessary for their salvation. To return, then, to the peace and quiet in which God's servant should always keep himself, I will say further, that this conversion, in order to be full of trust in God, must be understood to refer, not only to light and daily faults, but to others greater and heavier than usual, if at any time the Lord should suffer thee to fall into such; even though they be many together, and spring not from weakness and frailty only, but from deliberation. For the contrition which fills the troubled soul with scruple only, will never bring it to perfection, if it be not joined to a loving confidence in the Goodness and Mercy of God. And this is especially necessary to persons who desire not only to come forth from their miseries, but also wish to attain to a high degree of holiness, and to great love and union with God. And because many spiritual persons do not rightly apprehend this truth, they bear about with them a broken and distrustful heart and spirit, which hinders them from advancing onward, and fitting themselves for the higher graces which one after another God had prepared for them. And they often lead a very miserable, useless, and pitiable life, because they will follow nothing but their own imagination, and embrace not the true and salutary doctrine which leads by the royal way to the high and solid virtues of the Christian life, and to that peace which Christ Himself left us upon earth. Such persons should, whenever they find themselves in any disquietude, seek the advice of their spiritual father, or of

any one whom they think capable of giving them the like advice, and committing themselves to him, set themselves wholly at rest. We will finish in the following chapter what we have to say of the uneasiness arising from failings.

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## CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE SOUL SHOULD, WITHOUT LOSING TIME, QUIET HERSELF, AND MAKE PROGRESS.

TAKE this for thy rule, whenever thou shalt have fallen into any fault, be it great or small, and though thou have committed the same four thousand times a day, and that voluntarily and knowingly: disturb not thyself with bitter discontent, disquiet not thyself, lose no time in scrutinizing, but instantly acknowledging what thou hast done, considering thine own frailty with humility, turn thyself lovingly to thy God, and with thy mouth, or at least with thy mind, say to Him, "Lord, of myself I have done this, and nothing else could be expected from such as I am, but these and other faults; nor should I even have confined myself to these, had not Thy Goodness raised me up and not forsaken me. I thank Thee for that from which Thou hast delivered me, and I grieve over that which I have committed, because I responded not to Thy grace. Pardon me, and give me grace never more to offend Thee; and grant that nothing may ever separate me from Thee, Whom Alone I would ever serve and obey." This done, do not lose time in anxiety, thinking and imagining that the Lord has not

forgiven thee, but go on with thine exercises in faith and peace, as if thou hadst not fallen into any fault ; and this thou must do not only once, but a hundred times, if necessary, and at every moment, and with the same confidence and peace the last time as the first, for thus wilt thou greatly honour the Goodness of God, Whom thou art bound to think of as all Gracious, and infinite in Mercy beyond thy power to imagine. By this means, nothing will ever disturb thy profit, thy perseverance, and thy progress ; nor wilt thou waste time in vain and fruitlessly. And by thus acting, thou mayest also turn this fault and failing to good account, rising from it with an intense act of acknowledgment of thine own wretchedness, abasing thyself before God, and adding thereto an act of acknowledgment of His Mercy, loving and exalting it. And it will follow, that the same cause will make thee rise higher than before thy fall, by the help which God will give thee, if thou wilt use it aright. And to all that has here been said, all unquiet and anxious spirits should attend, and they would see how great is their blindness in thus losing time to their own serious hurt. And this warning should be carefully observed, because it is one of the keys wherewith the soul may unlock great spiritual treasures, and enrich herself in a short time.

## MAXIMS

FOR THE GUIDANCE OF A SOUL THAT WISHES TO

LOVE JESUS CHRIST PERFECTLY.

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1. EVER long to increase in love towards Jesus Christ.

2. Make frequent acts of love to Jesus Christ, beginning from the first moment of waking; go to sleep with an act of love, ever seeking to unite thine own will to the Will of Jesus Christ.

3. Meditate often on His Passion.

4. Seek unto Jesus for His Love.

5. Communicate often, and many times through the day spiritually.

6. Every morning receive thine own special cross from the Hands of Jesus Christ.

7. Desire Paradise and death, in order to love Jesus Christ perfectly, and in all eternity.

8. Speak often of the love of Jesus Christ.

9. Accept contradictions for Jesus Christ.

10. Delight in the happiness of God,

11. Do what is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and neglect nothing which pleases Him.

12. Desire and seek that all may love Jesus Christ.

13. Pray often for sinners.

14. Drive from the heart every affection which is not for Jesus Christ.

15. Offer thyself to Jesus Christ to suffer every pain for love of Him.

16. Be resolved to die rather than commit deliberately a venial sin.

17. Bear crosses with patience, saying: "Thus it pleaseth Jesus Christ."

18. Deny thine own pleasure for love of Jesus Christ.

19. Pray and meditate as much as thou canst.

20. Perform all the acts of mortification which obedience enjoins.

21. Perform thine exercises as if it were the last time.

22. Persevere in good works in time of dryness.

23. Do nothing and leave nothing undone out of human respect.

24. Complain not in sickness.

25. Love solitude in order to converse alone with Jesus Christ.

26. Drive away melancholy.

27. Often recommend thyself to such as love Jesus Christ.

28. In temptations fly to Jesus Crucified.

29. Trust wholly in the Passion of Jesus Christ.

30. Be not discouraged after a fall, but repent and resolve to amend.

31. Return good for evil.

32. Speak well of all, and excuse their intention, if thou canst not excuse their action.

33. Assist thy neighbour as much as in thee lieth.

34. Neither say nor do ought displeasing to thy neighbour; and if thou hast been wanting in charity, seek his forgiveness, or speak to him with gentleness.

35. Speak always with mildness and in a low tone of voice.

36. Offer to Jesus Christ all the slights or persecutions thou meetest with.

37. Esteem those set over thee as Jesus Christ.

38. Obey without reply and reluctance, and seek not thine own pleasure.

39. Love the lowest offices.

40. Love the poorest things.

41. Speak neither ill nor well of thyself.

42. Humble thyself always to inferiors.

43. Excuse not thyself under reproof.

44. Defend not thyself when blamed.

45. Be silent when disquieted.

46. Renew frequently thy resolve to be holy, saying: "My Jesus! I will be wholly Thine, be Thou wholly mine!"

**Thanks be to God.**

11







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